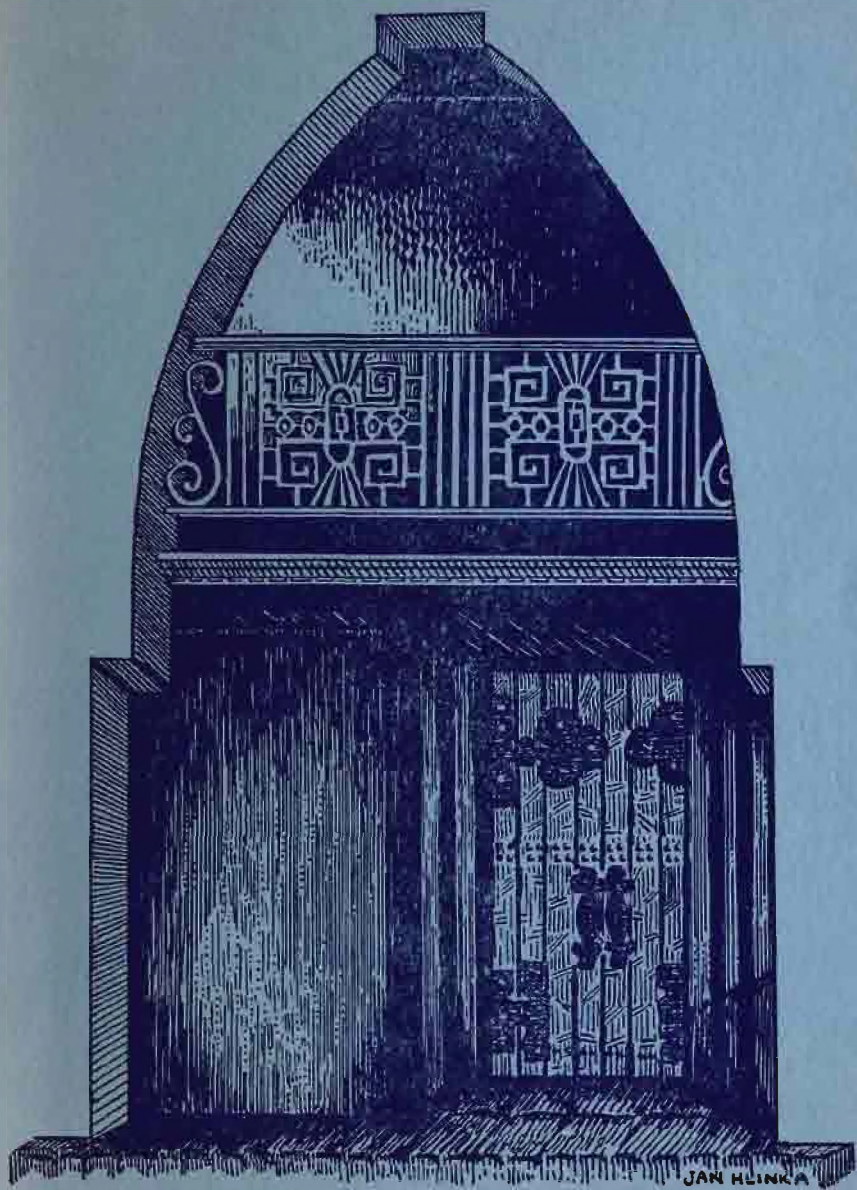


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# HORIZON

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HORIZON  
LINES

AN EDITORIAL

BY MANLY PALMER HALL



## Beyond Nausea

EXISTENTIALISM, or the philosophy of existence, appears to me to be rooted in the prevailing European disillusionment. A formal approach to the concept is difficult, due to the lack of agreement among its principal authorities and contemporary exponents. The basic theme is interpreted through the writings of Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and several others, and has found an articulate champion in Jean-Paul Sartre, whose existentialist novel, *Nausea*, has caused quite a stir in the American sphere of higher criticism. It is difficult to decide which authority should be quoted, as several of the most enthusiastic exponents have already rejected the word *existentialism* as being inadequate or reminiscent of "inauthentic" thinking.

In his introduction to *Existentialism*, by Jean-Paul Sartre, the translator, Bernard Frechtman, thus summarizes the basic concept of his author: "The chief effort of Sartre in this short work is to face squarely the implications for personal action of a universe without purpose. Assuming the non-existence of God, and denying the existence of a fixed human nature, Sartre refuses to allow man any support external to himself... But, in Sartre's view, this need not lead to quietism or despair. On the contrary, this awareness illuminates the needless burden that man carries and tries to force him to recognize that he is actively carrying it, rather than is passively impelled by it, that he may



choose different values and may choose to be a different person. It tries to make man acutely aware of his freedom."

Philosophies rise to the surface of man's intellectual life as the result of compulsions. They are contrived to justify, explain, satisfy, or reconcile conditions or circumstances which naturally or normally offend, perturb, or frighten the person in the body. Uncertainty sets in motion anxiety mechanisms, and these destroy present composure by burdening it with regrets about the past and fears concerning the future. Human anxiety is increased by the contemplation of such mysteries as the existence or essential integrity of God, the presence of an eternal pattern of behavior and conduct which can be obeyed or disobeyed, and the survival of consciousness after death, with its moral or unmoral imponderables. To live in fear of death is the intellectual equivalent of dying in infancy. Anxiety concerning ourselves, our opinions, our codes, our religions, philosophies, or sciences, our institutions, and all such cherished *memento mori* gravitate against any measure of freedom or contentment while still we live.

Existentialism has created the term *existent* to describe one who posits the state of existence, and negates the consequences of existing. In the presence of conflict among the masters of the school, it would be imprudent to dogmatize. In a universe without purpose, the purposeful individual is somewhat of an anachronism. Then to terminate the purposeful individual by denying him the consolation of a significant immortality would seem, at first thought, to transform life into a comedy of errors. Yet, the tenet that man has no support external to himself is a natural and inevitable conclusion in the face of the present trend in world affairs. The insecurity of environment has destroyed confidence in both the God-made and the man-made worlds. The mind, disillusioned in one, seeks refuge in the other, only to be again disappointed. Already addicted to the prevailing materialism, the intellect is untheological and would like to become unhistorical. Most of all, however, the mind is limited, especially in matters of penetration. It flounders about in a sea of doubts. Uncertainty itself becomes the only certainty, ignorance the only fact, and existence the only proof of, or justification for, our capacity for anxiety.

This cheerful thinking, like almost any concept, can be ably defended because it is supported by the imminent, if not by the eminent. Even so-called facts sometimes bear false witness and have slight meaning when separated from a larger context. Thus, it is easier to prove the nonexistence of God than to demonstrate beyond dispute the existence of God. In times of prosperity, we are inclined to assume the presence of a benevolent Deity, but, in generations of adversity when God is most necessary, his presence is least obvious. The last thirty years of European history have shaken the faith of numerous intellec-



tuals whose religious convictions were basically mental, supported by rational procedures rather than by any natural or devout spiritual convictions. If a man can argue God into existence, he can destroy the hypothesis of Divinity by merely reversing the argument. The God-concept waxes and wanes with the tides of human affairs and with the lunar pull of the human imagination.

Upon the assumption that the existent is the one who exists, he can be contrasted to the phenomenal state of existence in which he exists. To exist is a kind of reality, but existence apart from the one existing is a kind of illusion. Time and change flow through the individual and exist for him only through his acceptance of their implications. To exist completely apart from the implications of existence is to attain a mundane Nirvanic state which carries with it freedom from anxiety about the inauthentic. There is something remotely suggestive of the Oriental doctrine of nonaction lurking somewhere in the background of existentialism. The dynamic quality of action is held in suspension by the realization of the futility of endeavor. Yet, without action of some kind, how can existence be justified? The answer is simple: Existence neither can be nor should be justified. All justification arises from traditional morality concerning the demands or requirements of existence. Actually, existence demands nothing and confers itself without regard for consequences.

It is easy to play with words and arrive at elegant meaningless phrases, like the "dynamics of purposeless purpose" or "purposed purposelessness." These might convey something to a Zen monk, but lack dimensions for the average member of the proletariat. Yet, can it be denied that existence fulfills itself through the mere fact of itself? To go further, it would be difficult to refute the argument that to exist is the primary cause for the misfortunes that wait upon existence. In simpler words, if we were not, we would not, and could not! The only difficulty seems to be, we are. Naturally, for this school, the fact that we are is extremely discouraging. We must gather our resources and make the best of it. More unreasonable than the obviously disastrous fact that we are is our tragic anxiety over the possibility that we shall cease to be. *We are* ends in *we are not*, and it is a question which burden is the heavier. Like the Greek Pliny, we can solemnly declare that the greatest misfortune is to be born, and the greatest fortune is to die immediately.

But instead of dying, we go forth building empires, making wars, and preparing various legacies for our posterity. Even presuming that we can bestow upon the future those blessings we ourselves shall not live to see, there is still a dead end. Posterity itself is a perpetual descent of existences, all of which end in oblivion. Building for the future is therefore merely an escape mechanism, for the future, like



the past, will soon rest with yesterday's seven thousand years. Traditions are passed on, like the torches of Greek racers, but the runners themselves perish by the way. There is great clamoring for a little while—some of comedy and tragedy, much loss and a little gain, a span of confusion, and then, as Hamlet says: "The rest is silence."



Sartre tells us that the existentialist "thinks it very distressing that God does not exist, because all possibility of finding values in a heaven of ideas disappears along with Him; there can no longer be an *a priori* Good, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it." This loss of God may be included among the causes of forlornness, as the word is used by Heidegger. Apparently, there is also some division among the existentialists on points theological, for the school recognizes two branches of the doctrine—one Christian and the other atheistic. Regrets over the loss of God and the sense of isolation which comes to those thus deprived of spiritual moorings have led the followers of the belief to feel that existentialism is suitable only to the strong and the free. It is beyond the capacities of the *bourgeoisie*, but they can debate its issues with considerable fervor after a few bottles of red wine.

God is not rejected as an unnecessary hypothesis, but as a source of definable or demonstrable good. Dostoevski is dragged into the discussion because he says: "If God didn't exist, everything would be possible." This line pleased Sartre, who says that it is the very starting point of existentialism. I note the peculiarity that the word *God* and personal pronouns referring to Deity are capitalized throughout at least the English translation of Sartre's book. Is it not a bit inconsistent to capitalize a synonym for a nonexistent being?

Now that the delusion about God and good have been appropriately dissipated and man in his freedom stands like Alexander Selkirk "monarch of all he surveys," exactly what does he survey? He is made to inherit a meaningless and purposeless immensity, about which



he knows little. He has conquered a world he has first made barren. He must substitute an entirely new group of incentives emerging completely from himself. Yet, these intensely individualistic urges, if he has them, must be socialized. He cannot afford to destroy the unity of society, even while he denies its significance. Atheism must not lead to anarchy, lest the existentialist lose the only thing he has—existence. If he assumes that all things are possible, he must assume the completeness of his own potential. If he is wise enough to reject the concept of God, is he strong enough to take the place of Deity in the management of his own affairs and in the administration of the collective welfare? Is he not subtly transferring the divine attributes from God to himself? If all things are possible to man, does he not in this definition become identical with God? Perhaps there is a hint of theological absolutism lurking somewhere in this compound.

A man as wise as Laplace is supposed to have been made a subtle claim for personal divinity, even if he did not press that claim. When Napoleon asked Laplace why there was no mention of God in the *Mecanique celeste*, the Marquis replied: "Sire, I have no need for that hypothesis." In fairness to Laplace, we may say that the authenticity of the statement is questioned. How does it happen that a group capable of correcting so vast an error is unable to consolidate its own thinking on simpler subjects?

Now that great Pan is dead, the world waits fallow and rather barren. The future rests in the keeping of the existentialist, who has promoted himself to a high office which he may find some difficulty in filling to the general satisfaction. I may be wrong, but I question if Sartre's *Nausea* will supplant the *Age of Fable*, the Holy Scriptures, or even the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*. When all things are possible, what actually happens? Apparently, exactly the same things that occurred when all things were not possible, but this may be prejudice. Does man actually desire to bear the burdens of complete self-responsibility, and can he even contemplate so heavy a chore without developing psychotic symptoms? The universal all-possibility may assume the proportions of the Old Man of the Sea, who grew heavier the longer Sinbad carried him. After all, is there any bondage more complete than the implication of absolute freedom?

We can sympathize with the Parisian group over the abuses of traditionalism and the paralyzing effects of rigid dogmatic limitation imposed upon human thinking. We may also agree that the policy of depending upon God for such simple requirements as we may meet by our own efforts is wrong and frustrating. In a way, however, many of us now live in an unpatterned world functioning from the assumption that we are expected to build our own cosmos out of the raw materials of an all-pervading chaos. Dewey would dedicate us to this



Herculean task. For some years now, great nations and their leading industrialists, economists, and educators have existed from day to day with no vision of tomorrow. They have rejected completely the Platonic doctrine of archetypes, and have held that the future is a vacuum to be filled with our numerous and extraordinary accomplishments. To date, however, the vacuum remains a vacuum, and, for lack of vision, the public mind relaxes from a common goal and indulges a wide variety of private whimsies which by any name appear equally innane.

Man as the creature with all-possibility becomes the personification of no-possibility at all. A simple example of this is the rise of strong men who, having achieved immunity from the restrictions imposed upon the masses, find their freedom the proper and natural opportunity to exploit those whom they govern. Napoleon, Hitler, and Mussolini are among the historic names of those properly distinguished by at least relative all-possibility, but they achieved the probable rather than the possible. Naturally, no system of philosophy is going to advance excess as a reasonable by-product of freedom. Yet, philosophies of freedom justify excess in minds still in slavery to ambition and opinion. The doctrine of the all-possible should be disseminated with some caution among those gentile souls as yet deficient in existential graces.

Then comes the problem of authentic and inauthentic thinking. On the ground that fact is authentic and the nonfactual is inauthentic, we are confronted with the age-old dilemma of the poverty of certainties in this uncertain sphere. Most available facts are in themselves sterile, inasmuch as they relate to the completely obvious and are without ethical utility. The moment we enter the rarified atmosphere of abstractions, we are without solid ground. The ontologist lives and functions in a world of reasonable hypotheses concerning subjects factually unknown. This caused Buddha and Socrates to emphasize the nonutility of elaborate speculations concerning the nature and substance of Eternal Being. About the only fact seems to be that a creature exists capable of making a systematic inquiry into the nature of itself. The results are nearly always sequences of interpretation by which facts can be assumed to exist, if we are willing to accept without question certain previous interpretations.

A moderate optimism about the availability of useful facts seems to distinguish at least a few of the existentialists. The trouble is that these facts even in themselves are comparatively sterile unless they are given vitality and fruitfulness by interpretation. There is considerable to be said in favor of authentic thinking, if we can capture the elusive shape of the authentic. To date, however, it is principally a sequence of negative conclusions which contribute to anxiety, if not actually to



anguish. Consider, for example, the precious fact that all living things must die. There is relatively complete agreement about the inevitability of death, but a wide divergence of opinion as to the implications of the phenomenon. To some, it is a complete cessation of personal existence, and to others, merely an incident in a motion through the extensions of an immortal Being. If the idealist be considered inauthentic for postulating continuity of consciousness beyond the grave, would not the materialist be equally inauthentic in postulating oblivion to be the natural end of all living organisms? Are we more authentic because we accept the obvious? To extend this procedure to its reasonable or unreasonable conclusion would be to accept as obvious and therefore factual much that is demonstrably ridiculous. If optimism about the unknown is an indication of feeble-mindedness, is pessimism more healthful?

Of course, we must face the measure of the human unbelief. The average human being, though he may claim a conviction of immortality, conducts his daily affairs without permitting such a conviction to influence or modify his behavior. The focus of mortal attention is most assuredly upon mortal matters. Probably, the conscious mind gives slight attention to that which lies beyond the mortal horizon. Though we approach death certain of a blessed resurrection in the spirit, we have no mind to hasten the glorious event and become more reluctant as the time approaches. Subconsciously, therefore, we may be more certain of the fact of death than we are of the hope of immortality. Even pious indoctrination is not always sufficient to convince that part of ourselves which lies below the threshold of the conscious.

If man is the only creature capable of the realization of his own ultimate dissolution, this may be intimately related to the circumstance that man alone is plagued with those ambitions, resolutions, determinations, and even inclinations which reveal themselves through the compulsion to build material civilizations. A plant, for instance, is existent, and fulfills itself without pressures of any kind simply because it is unaware of any purpose "in front" of itself. It feels no pressure of destiny, no need to compromise fact for tradition or reality for interpretation. We could not imagine neurotic pumpkins, psychotic dandelions, or frustrated turnips.

The human story is one of perpetual disappointments. The achievement of the heart's desire is extremely rare, and when accomplished immediately appears less desirable. We go to the grave with dreams, hopes, and aspirations which have been systematically blocked by the pressure of externals. Living is a struggle rewarded most commonly by discouragement. That which is most desired remains elusive, and that which we most fear forever comes upon us. Proceeding from generals to particulars, we can nearly always understand why others



fail. Either their projects are unreasonable or their means and methods are impractical. Of course, our own reverses are forever different—a cruel destiny conspires against us. As we hear the stories of man's best-laid schemes, we are inclined to agree with the existentialists that there is a great deal of inauthentic mentation.

Utterly unable to estimate authentically his own limitations, man is forever attempting to accomplish that for which his nature and temperament are unfitted. Such a devotion to the impractical, and factually the impossible, is certain to increase anxiety mechanisms and cause the life to become a cycle of perturbations. Ambition is at the root of many foolish projects, and even stubbornness, a completely senseless attitude, can cause us to continue ways and means which have already demonstrably failed. Suffering goes beyond anxiety and can terminate in the spiritual tragedy which the existentialists call anguish. They make much, not only of the word, but also of its implications. They regard it as contributing largely to emancipation. Through anguish experienced internally, man can become existent. Thus, anguish is a symptom of the collapse of the inauthentic. Perhaps it is the realization of the inevitability of the authentic.

There are simple, ethical conclusions to be derived from this concept. If the human being can experience relaxation from illusion, he approaches reality. This is Buddhism and Taoism. Buddha taught that there was no release from the illusion of birth and death as long as the tyranny of the mind bound the *sattva*, or self, to the wheel which turns forever upon the axle of ignorance. The alternate exhilarations and depressions which destroy the normalcy of human life are due to the pursuit of positive and negative delusions. We have interpreted life as stress and strain, and without these symptoms of tension we doubt the significance of our own purposes. In fact, unless we are on the ragged edge of something, we also lose social significance. Our friends only respect us to the degree that we are attempting the impossible or the worthless. If we are quiet and integrated, we are convicted of indecision and mediocrity.

To my mind, one of the limitations of existentialism is its inability to cope satisfactorily with the mystery of its great fact—the fact of death. The rapid increase of our material civilization, with its tragic consequences, has taken place within the same time-framework that has measured the rise of materialism. The more materialistic we become, apparently the more neurotic we become, and this has led to a rapid development of science, industry, and commerce, and the intensification of combative, competitive, and even criminal instincts. Materialism has placed tremendous emphasis upon the fact of death, yet, assuming that life is all that a man has to lose, materialism has con-



tributed a variety of new and ingenious means for destroying life or for hazarding its security on all the levels of human functions.

The existent is invited to make the most of life while he lives, but even this program loses most of its significance if death brings with it a complete oblivion. The authentic and the inauthentic thinkers come in a little while to the state in which they cannot even remember whether they were authentic or inauthentic. Perhaps this is the very soul of the problem. We must resign ourselves to being authentic while we are authentic; thus, living well for no purpose rather than badly for no purpose. It becomes a matter of imminent satisfaction in the presence of the fact that nothing is eminent. This may be a philosophic opportunism, but can have no direct moral consequence beyond a society reconstructed around a concept of authenticity. There is, of course, the consolation that the person who lives well is secure against the possibility that he might be immortal, and therefore might be required to account for his behavior somewhere, sometime.

It is not entirely ethical to cultivate a code of virtue because of fear of future perdition or hope of future reward. This has been one of the defects of theology, which has measured everything in terms of the future and sacrificed most of the concerns of the present. The existent dreams of an immediate adjustment to the authentic values of the universe. He would penetrate the sham with the clarity of an inner conviction, regarding the clarification of his own code as a major contribution to the security of his world. He denies that he is self-centered; rather, he desires to be authentically centered. Sartre uses the term *nausea* to signify *revulsion for the inauthentic*. Sickened by the experience of a false concept and a false code, the individual, by this very sickening, approaches the authentic. There has been discussion as to whether some happier means are available for releasing the mind from its false position in relation to itself. To a degree at least, the human experience justifies Sartre and his group in the assumption that realities are closer in time of trouble than in time of joy. As long as the inauthentic remains attractive, there is slight inclination to rebel against the *status in quo*. It is like asking a successful businessman to change his methods. Success substantiates the means employed. It is only failure that reveals defects.

The recent collapse of European civilization, under the impact of two great wars and the resulting economic chaos, may be termed





evidence of defect. In the face of the evidence, it is impossible to defend adequately the attitudes and policies which brought ruin to a considerable part of the human race and now threatens the security of the remaining parts. The causes for a world catastrophe must be considered inauthentic, as there is nothing to imply that the universe required such a disaster. The tragedy was rooted in human codes, human standards of values, and human concepts of right and wrong. In view of the ends achieved, the means are indefensible. Existentialism is a product of time and place, and attacks a basic concept which has afflicted with extraordinary severity all brackets of contemporary living. It may even be the beginning of a Philosophic Era for the West and, like most newborn things, has but slight resemblance to the heart's desire.

Oswald Spengler, in his *Decline of the West*, believed that the era of the Great Wars would be followed by a revival of an ethical philosophy similar to Buddhism. No other great teacher has stated with more clarity the penalties of illusion. The Buddhist concept of illusion, or *maya*, is not completely different from the existentialist concept of the inauthentic. Both schools have defined the need for a reality. Both recognize unreality as the cause of the psychotic state of humanity. Few psychotics are willing to acknowledge their own condition, and there is no one so mad that he can measure his own madness. Humanity, accustomed to a frustrated existence, has defined this as the measure and rule of the inevitable.

Buddha was more successful in his solution of the "fact." By the doctrine of rebirth, he enlarged the theater of man's enterprise, and gave moral and ethical significance to the renovation of the individual and his world. This brings another dimension to bear on the subject. Is it authentic thinking to be entirely limited to the objective? Must we discover the fact only by consideration of physical factors? What about the experience of fact by internal illumination? Must the mystical experience be considered as inauthentic and merely a highly sublimated escape mechanism? Even assuming that most so-called spiritual experiences are not authentic, is it impossible that a genuine illumination can take place?

If there is in man the possibility of a direct participation in fact by experience, naturally this would profoundly affect the human subconscious, especially its neurotic pressures. It seems that advanced mystics have, in a number of ways, substituted a deep and abiding hope for those doubts and fears which have driven mankind to the brink of disaster. Certain it is that these illumined idealists have advocated detachment from the delusion of masses, and have found simple and abiding contentment in contemplation of, and in obedience



to, the laws of Nature. In a sense, here are the poets which certain of the existentialists believe to be the most existent members of existing society. If *samadhi*, a mystical state attained by Eastern ascetics, may be described as authentic, then mysticism is nearer to the truth than materialism. Most important of all, mysticism has a working method for the direct achievement of an existent state. A further question suggests itself: Is it possible to depart from the unreal without, to a compensatory degree, approaching the real?

The insecurities of material existence always incline toward an intensification of the quest for proof of immortality. Many human beings have arrived at positive conclusions and are convinced that they have sufficient evidence to justify an unconditioned acceptance of the survival of consciousness. What effect has this sincere belief had upon them as individuals? Does it result in the appropriate modification of inauthentic concepts? My experience has been that inconsistency remains and that self-conversion is incomplete. If a deep and abiding faith in the survival of consciousness is not sufficient to insure integration of the personality, will an equally profound and sincere conviction of nonsurvival accomplish more? Most religious persons are inclined to become fanatical, but in this particular are the materialists less extreme? In practical contact with both equations, each reveals an equal degree of the evangelical instinct.

Thus the sincere conviction of survival and the equally sincere conviction of nonsurvival end in a common dissatisfaction. Both groups remain unhappy because they cannot enlighten each other. It is doubtful if the belief that life does not survive the grave will heal the wounds of the worldly. It is perfectly possible for this concept to become as tyrannical as the most despotic theology. Philosophy attempts to reduce the probability of tyranny by depriving ideas of their emotional content. Completely sterilized of emotionalism, mental processes are unacceptable to those accustomed to react emotionally to every stimulus. It is doubtful if the emotional content in man could ever be completely subdued, and it is still more doubtful if such a course would be desirable, even if possible.

The existentialists insist that man should not regard himself as dwelling in a house from which he must escape through doors or windows. Man has no doors or windows, because he is already outside of the house and has only imagined himself to be surrounded by barriers of any kind. It will be hard to press this concept to the point of conviction, however, as long as the physical body is obviously a limitation through which the human mind must function more or less inadequately. As long as the person is in the body, he will have trouble believing himself to be out of doors. The body is associated with the idea of world form and general imprisonment within the



limitations of a material universe. Even though the prison be comparatively comfortable, the food good, and the future relatively secure, the prisoner longs for freedom. He will hazard not only security, but even his life in order to escape from the concept of limitation to the concept of liberty. If, having freed himself from his cell, the escaping prisoner finds outside the higher and stronger wall of inevitable death, he will also resolve to undergo the further perils of further release. To my mind, it is most doubtful if man will ever be content to accept death as the termination of conscious existence.

The more the reality of death is thrust upon him, the more resolutely will he determine to overcome the last great enemy. Civilization is the record of man dying in the search for life. Generation after generation has fought to extend material existence and to discover the spiritual or intellectual means of participating in an immortal state. It may all be wishful thinking, but it is essentially a part of man's disposition. We must yet decide which is actually the stronger—the fact of death or the inevitable and indomitable will to live. In the recent war, members of certain fatalistic religions simply sat down and waited to be killed because they believed that their time had come. Can we depend upon any kind of satisfactory living if we accept, without reservation, the reality of all-consuming death?

One of the most powerful elements of the Christian faith is its preachment of the resurrection. Christ became the symbol of triumph over the grave. While the abuses of the faith have largely compromised its effectiveness, we pose a problem: Do those calling themselves Christians who have perverted the faith and exploited it for selfish purposes *believe* in immortality? In other words, if they personally have accepted even the literal doctrines of heaven and hell, would they—could they—engage in personal practices which must lead to the most horrible consequences and bring their souls to the threshold of damnation?

The proof of unbelief lies in procedures contrary to belief. Those who profane a faith have no security to look forward to within that faith. Peace for them must result from the secret conviction that the advantages of this world are paramount, and beyond the present life lies merciful oblivion. Perhaps, then, here are your real materialists. It takes the courage of a negative certainty to live badly in this world. Yet, in all religions there are evidences of this perfidy by which followers or members are divided into two groups. Is it not probable that the individual who accepts death as factual will be more impoverished than enriched by placing this "possibility of the impossible" as the ultimate state?

Remember, that in terms of existence no living creature has experienced death. We may come very close, but if we return at all we



have experienced dying, not death, and dying is the diminution of life but not its extinction. We are not even sure that complete unconsciousness is equivalent to nonexistence. To contemplate death, therefore, is to contemplate the unknown, and for the living, the unbelievable. Can we, therefore, build a philosophy of life upon that which cannot be known *per se*? To do so, we must imagine that which we cannot imagine, and we must accept the possibility of a condition which to our consciousness is impossible. We are invited to this delightful task, but even had we the full inclination, have we any means for indulging the pastime?

Or perhaps we are not supposed to give the subject much consideration. It would be better to be devoutly existent until the very moment when we become nonexistent. But even the existentialists themselves recognize man's tendency to function "in front" of himself. He is always a short distance into his own future. Even while living today, he is planning tomorrow and fitting it to receive him. Today without tomorrow is a trifle too vegetational for most of us. To live only *now* may be possible if we are included in enough other people's plans for tomorrow. Even bugs, bees, and squirrels have some slight forethought or instinct for the inclemency of future seasons, and provide accordingly. Then, again, perhaps the living of the eternal *now* involves a certain accumulation *now*, which we shall be privileged to protect or use through the sequence of *nows* that lie ahead. This sounds more platitudinous than practical and may be little more than a play on words, which so often is mistaken for thinking.

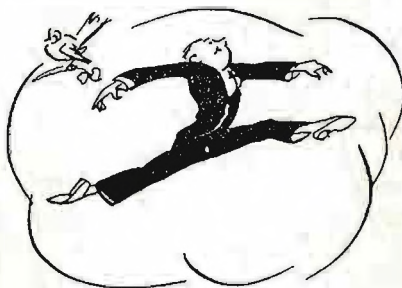
As the experience of death is not only remote but also repugnant, the materialist seeks to put off the evil day by scientific means, and the idealist, by the reasonable demonstration of the probabilities of survival. Would not the absolute acceptance by consciousness of the fact of immortality be just as conducive to existent thinking as the absolute acceptance of the inevitability of death? It seems to me that life vanquishes death even on the plane of reason. Immortality invites to the correction of existing difficulties even more than does death. In fact, is not the belief in death, held subconsciously but permitted to manifest symbolically through the human institutions, the real cause of the evils with which we have afflicted ourselves? It seems to me that the very practice of evil bears witness to the conviction that death is the perfect refuge of the evildoer.

A simple example of that is capital punishment. Many criminals prefer execution to life imprisonment. I talked to a convicted man in one of our large prisons years ago. He described the death sentence as the easy way out and pitied others of his kind who had a "stretch" of ten or twenty years ahead of them. He was not one of those who had accepted at the last moment the consolation of any faith which



taught immortality. Thus, the fact of death can become a two-edged sword, for the simple reason that life cannot be completely estimated by any system of intellectual concepts or formulas.

Kierkegaard, in his *Journal*, wrote in 1854 that "the existence of a Christian is contact with Being." He also said that one is not a Christian; one becomes a Christian. In his concept, therefore, there is an element of eternal becoming. This is essentially a Neoplatonic idea. Life is a perpetual adjustment. The moment the individual refuses to adjust, he ceases to be contemporary. There is no place for mental or spiritual security apart from an ever-becoming. Essential progress toward freedom is described as sustained effort. Although the terminology is strange to our conventional thought-patterns, it seems to me that this sustained effort is equivalent to evolution on both the material and spiritual planes. A peculiar property of life is that it is a self-sustaining effort. Life always manifests through the processes of living, and we have no positive experience of life apart from the aliveness which we discover in ourselves and throughout Nature.



The impulse to freedom is directly associated with our concepts of limitation. For each individual, this concept differs. Limitation is the immediate obstacle, restraint, or inadequacy between us and the immediate goal. We have words in common representing concepts with few common denominators. Success, for example, represents the attainment or achievement of that immediately desired, but carries no specific intimation of that which is desirable to any one person. Success may in some cases be victory over limitation or the attainment of that which is desired but remote. It may stand for material gain, personal advancement, intellectual superiority, or spiritual security.

The Neoplatonists regarded limitation as the inadequacy of the individual and not as the strength or magnitude of the obstacle. Limitation is ineffectiveness. It is a relationship between the self and others. We have a delicate equation involving the relation between one and many. The self is one which is without the experience of



limitation or defeat and without the capacity to accept through experience any essential limitation of its own being. Yet, this self is a minority when analyzed intellectually. The mind intimidates the being by the processes of reason. "Common sense," for example, tells us that we cannot accomplish as individuals that which is denied by the motion of masses. The more we analyze the masses, the more hopeless our own positions become and the more completely we are limited. Yet, most of us are convinced that the self is superior to the mass. This does not necessarily imply egotism, but rather egoism. The unconquerable self revolts against the reasonable, and asserts what Plotinus called the power of self over circumstance. In one way or another, we all practice this code of uniqueness. Those rules which apply to others are inapplicable to us because we live in the consciousness of a self and have only an intellectual concept of another, whether this *another* be an individual or a collective.

A simple demonstration of this concept is the difficulty which we all have when we attempt to benefit from the experiences of others or impose our own experiences upon others in an effort to modify their conduct. The parent, attempting to direct a child, finds many times that the child rejects the experience of its elders and is forced to experience for itself. Actually, therefore, that which happens to another, except in the most obvious and evident things, has little weight in the determinations and decisions of the self. Advice is usually reactionary or traditional. It advocates some kind of conformity accomplished by the limitation of the instinct to freedom. The revolt of youth is nearly always a revolt against patterns already commonly accepted and therefore regarded as frustrating the instinct to become. The self, seeking to become the future, finds its progress limited by previous states of becoming which now constitute the past. This past, like a bog or a quagmire, would absorb into itself all futures if the power of reason alone dominated the human endeavor.

Resistance to the mass, however, sets into operation a series of negative factors. The steepness of a hill becomes more obvious as we attempt to climb it, and there are no obstacles in the way of the individual who is going nowhere. The quest for freedom, therefore, produces the experience of slavery, even as the search for life immediately produces the challenge of death. Anxiety and anguish are the inevitable lots of those moved by the urge of forever becoming, even as inertia rewards those who feel that they have become. The egotist, satisfied with himself, gains but slight comfort, for he must inevitably become dissatisfied with all except himself. He occupies a static place in a dynamic world. He is not jostling limitation; therefore, he is being jostled by those who move past him along the road toward becoming.



Jean Wahl, in commenting upon Heidegger, presents the following summary: "In any case, the experience of anguish reveals us to ourselves as out in the world, forlorn, without recourse or refuge. Why we are flung into the world, we do not know. This brings us to one of the fundamental assertions of the philosophy of existence: we are, without our finding any reason for our being; hence, we are existence without essence." This may imply that reason for being is equivalent to essence, and as no reason is demonstrable in the terms of this philosophy, we suffer the frustration of being purposeless. In a sense, this is the separation of existentialism from idealism, but again, perhaps, it is a matter of words. Essence implies essential, and in the sphere of present considerations, essential implies, in turn, some vast pattern that has always existed or is unfolding from within its potential.

Human purpose must imply universal purpose, for man can go nowhere unless the universe is going somewhere. That the human being should have a purpose in a purposeless collective is unthinkable. If essence is a result of existence rather than the cause of it, then all existence must be equally capable of releasing essence from itself. In other words, whatever potentials we possess come from a common potential, and whatever potencies we manifest can also be manifested by a sense, this is the separation of existentialism from idealism, but he is not unique as a being, for he participates in the fact of being and has no peculiar title to that fact.

It seems to me that a universe without a purpose, inhabited by creatures attaining liberation by discovering this purposeless, is no distinct improvement over previous concepts. Freedom gained by postulating liberty as emancipation from purpose will be difficult to integrate into a working ethics. Perhaps in some remote time the race will unfold new faculties with which to estimate abstractions and new strength with which to sustain the consequences of discovery. At the moment, however, we seem to need a less intellectual and more sympathetic form of spiritual nutrition.

Human relationships require no elaborate explanations in order that they may be considerably improved. What we need most is not emancipation, but that simple mental and emotional integrity which St. Paul says "suffereth long and is kind." The gentle practice of precepts long honored but not applied would have immediate utility. A few specialized thinkers may find it useful to formulate certain concepts and use these to justify certain conduct, but, for the majority, conduct itself inspired by right conviction will reveal appropriate concepts and justify the acceptance of universal principles. There is question as to whether humanity has actually been as much the victim



of wrong principles as it has been of its natural instinct to sacrifice spiritual conviction for temporal advantage.

Man may be alone and forlorn, not because he exists without essence, but because he resents the challenge of essentials. He will remain in trouble as long as he interprets freedom as the right to exploit, whether this exploitation refers to himself, his fellow creatures, his natural resources, or his spiritual potentials. Can he solve himself by solving his world first, or is this urge to generalize merely a defense mechanism to postpone the immediate consideration of his own delinquency? Perhaps if he solved himself first, he would by this very process resolve the mystery of the universe. Nearly all escapists escape in the direction of generalities. In this nebulous sphere, each can fashion others nearer to the substance of his heart's desire. It is easier to play at being God than it is to work at being man. Is it more profitable, however, to fit the universe to our present requirements or to fit ourselves for the eternal requirements of universals? I am reminded of an old writer who, having written a considerable interpretation upon a learned but obscure predecessor, stopped in the midst of a line with the simple remark: "And now to bed."



#### ESSENTIAL-FACTS DEPARTMENT

In olden days the bored patrons of the theater were content to yawn and fall asleep during a bad performance. It was in 1680 at the first presentation of *Aspar*, a tragedy by Fontenelle, that hissing was used for the first time as an expression of dissatisfaction.

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Many books were dedicated to Cardinal Richelieu. The French excelled in flattering this prelate. One dedication opens with the words: "Who has seen your face without being seized by those softening terrors which made the prophets shudder when God showed the beams of his glory? But as he whom they dared not approach in the burning bush, and in the noise of thunders, appeared to them some times in the freshness of the zephyrs, so the softness of your august countenance dissipates at the same time, and changes into dew, the small vapors which cover its majesty."

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When Dr. Young titled his poem *Night Thoughts*, he said that the title was not an affectation as he composed only at night except when he was on horseback.

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#### THE MODEST MAN

John Heywood was a favorite at court in the reigns of Henry VIII and Queen Mary. He wrote a work called *The Spider and the Fly* in 1556. It contains not less than 77 chapters, and at the beginning of each is a portrait of the author.





## Parsifal and the Holy Grail

AND it came to pass that Sir Galahad, Sir Percival, and Sir Bors met in a forest and rode together to the castle of King Pelles. After they had supped, they beheld a great light, and in the midst of the light were four angels bearing among them an ancient man in the vestments of a bishop. And they brought this man before a table of fine silver, and on the table appeared the Sangreal. The old bishop was Joseph of Arimathea, the first bishop of Christendom, and he celebrated the sacred Mysteries. And, at the consecration, our Blessed Lord appeared, saying: "Galahad, son, knowest thou what I hold between my hands?" "Nay," replied the maiden knight, "but if ye tell me." "This is," said our Blessed Lord, "the holy dish wherein I ate the lamb on Sher-Thursday, and now hast thou seen that thou desirest most to see, but yet hast thou not seen it so openly as thou shalt see it in the city of Sarras, in the spiritual place. Therefore thou must go hence, and bear with thee this holy vessel, for this night it shall depart from the realm of Logris that it shall never be seen more here." Sir Galahad, having anointed the wounded King Pelles with the blood which dropped from his spear, and made him whole, departed with his friends, Bors and Percival, to the mystic city Sarras, where he was made king. (See *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, 2nd Series, by S. Baring-Gould.)

The great cycle of the Grail legends seems to have originated among the

trouweres and other mystic poets, musicians, and members of the Minnesang of the old High German. These romancers were ministers and minstrels of the hidden Albigenian church and should be regarded as the forerunners of the Renaissance and the Reformation. It is not possible in the present article even to digest the Grail literature, as our principal consideration is to be the use of this mass of legendry by Richard Wagner in the development of his great religious-music drama, *Parsifal*. Although rooted in the productions of Giot, the jongleur, von Eschenbach, the Troubadour and Templar, and von Scharfenberg, the minstrel, Wagner's opera is essentially a production of his own genius, both musically and symbolically. In the music, Wagner uses the *Great Dresden Amen* as the Grail theme, and in the libretto he employs von Eschenbach's *Titurel* as thematic material, building upon it a vast tribute to the Secret and Universal Church.

We are inclined to think of Wagner as a musician totally absorbed in the production of his vast music dramas. Some critics have said unkind things about Wagner's intellectual music. They have felt something of the pressure of moral, social, and even political convictions in the productions of the great master. Wagner's tribute to the German guilds and essentially to the German *volk* was so ringing and so evident that it was deleted from a number of performances of the *Meistersinger* during the recent war. Wagner composed



two great cycles of epocal music: the first, *The Ring of the Nibelung*; and the second, the Grail series. *The Ring* is essentially pagan seen through the eyes of a Christian, and the Grail is essentially Christian interpreted through the instincts of a pagan. Neither is orthodox to its own subject. Together the two great cycles form an Old and New Testament as parts of one heroic, musical scripture.

*Der Ring des Nibelungen* gave Wagner's imagination a magnificent opportunity to escape from the stereotyped plots of the Italian operas. Here was a subject of cosmic proportions, a mingling of sublimity and tragedy suitable to inspire and sustain a rich fabric of composition. Here, also, was an unfolding of patterns peculiarly suitable to the leitmotiv system.

The somber theme of *The Ring*, though borrowed from northern mythology, was fashioned anew by Wagner's metapolitical convictions. Thus, the curse of gold is approached as a moral issue. The fatal power of wealth brings heaven and earth to a common ruin. We may interpret as we please, but we should realize that Wagnerian mythology is a peculiar system of symbolism complete in itself and in no way dependent upon the ancient sagas and *Eddas*. The superficial explanation that Wagner altered the legends to meet the requirements of his music is untenable. The philosophy is as vital and masterful as the score.

The Grail operas, *Parsifal* and *Lohengrin*, present a system of mystical Christian ritualism not derived from any orthodox theology. All the noblest parts of the code of chivalry are involved in the creation of Mystery dramas which might have originated in some Egyptian sanctuary of initiation. Although *Parsifal* is usually performed on Good Friday and attracts an audience of church-minded music lovers, these are seldom aware of the unorthodoxies of the opera. Emotional pressures overcome the analytical faculties, and the doctrinal ele-

ments pass unnoticed or are actually reinterpreted to each person's satisfaction.

For example, just what was the ecclesiastical status of the Grail kings? There is nothing to indicate that the knights or their rulers had received priestly orders or were qualified, theologically speaking, to celebrate the sacraments. Yet, in the High Mass of the Grail no vested clergy is represented, even in a subordinate role. Here, then, is a confraternity of chivalry celebrating the highest mysteries of the faith and receiving the peculiar evidence of the divine favor without priest or bishop or even a lowly deacon. In the Grail ceremonies the cup itself is its own high priest, and the knights who serve its decrees are privileged to partake in the solemn sacraments without an earthly intercessor.

This is the foundation of the Albigensian heresy, for the bishops and clergy of this sect acknowledged a descent only from Joseph of Arimanthea, and rejected utterly the outer structure of the Christian church. They held the direct presence of Christ as Saviour of the World and Redeemer of Men, affirming that when three or more were gathered together in the spirit of true faith they became the living sanctuary by a mystery in the spirit. The code of the Grail was the religion of service, and this in turn consisted of the rules of chivalry. The knight went alone to a sacred place and there passed an extended period in fasting and vigil. He was called to knighthood by the strength of his own soul, and when he accepted this internal ordination he assumed, at the same time, the regulations of his Order or Brotherhood. He dedicated his life to the weak and the oppressed. He became the champion of virtue and innocence. He renounced all material ambition and offered his sword, the symbol of his manhood, to the service of his God. He voluntarily accepted obedience to his superiors in the Fraternities of Chivalry. He vowed never to draw his weapon in a false cause or to sheath it again until justice was done.



The importance of knighthood in a day of lawlessness, intrigue, and tyranny can scarcely be overestimated. At the same time, the great poetic epics of this period cannot be taken literally, for even when knighthood was in flower these brave champions did not devote their attention to dragons, ogres, and an endless stream of fair damsels in distress. Probably most of the knights never raised their swords or buckled on the full armor of righteousness. The code of chivalry was a way of personal living rather than an eternal conflict with monsters of one kind or another. The sworn and maiden knights were the champions of the rights of men, but usually their ways were peaceful and industrious. We should never confuse the heraldic Orders of Knighthood with the mystical or philosophical Orders. It was the right and privilege of a noble or peer to knight a faithful retainer on the field of battle for a deed of exceptional valor. Many great families trace their amorial bearings to some heroic ancestor thus honored for his physical courage.

In the mystic Fraternities of Chivalry, knighthood was earned by purity and dedication, and those who achieved it were, like Lohengrin, peers and princes of the Invisible Kingdom of the Grail. They served no liege but God and truth, bowed to no man, wore the arms of no ancient house, and departed if their names (true identities) were discovered. Thus, they were the Christian heirs to the Mystery systems of antiquity. In short, they were the initiates of the Secret Esoteric Schools.

The swan was the bird of the poets. When Orpheus was slain by the Ciconian women, he swore that he would not return to this world again through the body of a woman, and, according to his wish, he was reborn a swan. This, then, was the bird of the Troubadours and became, in the course of time, identified with minstrels, bards, and poets. The chorus of swans sang in the marshes of the underworld, and, in recognition of this curious symbolism,

Shakespeare was called the Swan of Avon in honor of his poetic excellence. The mother swan was the Albigenian church, and we remember that it was the crest of Lohengrin and that in the first act of *Parsifal* the guileless hero slays the sacred swan of Mont Salvat. For practical purposes, therefore, we must recognize the Kingdom of the Grail as identical in meaning with the mysterious Empire of the Poets. These Gnostic balladiers formed a constellation of idealists who defended the true faith through centuries of fanaticism and ignorance.

The Holy Grail was the symbol of the human heart, not only the physical heart but also the divine center of man's spiritual and corporeal constitutions. The heart is the throne of faith, the abode of natural goodness, the source of unfailing strength, and the high altar of a most secret sanctuary. Above the heart, as above the Ark of the Covenant, hovers the splendid clouds of the Shekinah's glory. It was from this cloud that God spoke as from a whirlwind, for the Shekinah was the chariot of the Eternal. The servants of the Grail were the followers of the heart-doctrine, the way of mystical union through humility, love, and prayer.

Within the Grail, as within the sacramental cup of Dionysus, was the ever-flowing blood of the Redeemer. Here, also, was what Boehme called the little light or lantern, which lighteth every man who cometh into the world. The word *cup* comes from *calix*, which means the seed pod of a flower. Thus, the heart is a seed from which grows the tree of the soul, which is truly the tree of life. In the old symbolism of the Rosicrucians, there was a heart con-





taining an eye gazing upward. This is the symbol of spiritual sight. According to the Egyptians, the heart contained seven rooms, in the most secret of which God dwelt alone.

The Kingdom of the Grail, though closely associated with the code of chivalry, was separate and apart from the military Orders of medieval European society. Even when knighthood flourished, the mystical tradition of the Hidden Church was but little understood. Knights, for the most part, attended their feudal barons and gave allegiance to the existing civil and ecclesiastical authorities. The Grail legend, for example, concerned only certain heretical groups which conceived the obligations of chivalry to be deeper than the service of existing sovereignties. To those with strong inner spiritual convictions, knighthood implied a sacred personal obligation completely apart from the personal ambitions of the military class.

In feudal Japan, Bushido was the code of the Samurai. Like the code of chivalry in Europe, it was a dedication to the service of principles beyond the normal requirements of gentility. The acceptance of the "way of honor" was personal and voluntary. The Samurai placed himself under certain restrictions of behavior, and imposed upon his own nature an obligation of moderation, thoughtfulness, and integrity. The Japanese Ronin (knight) became virtually a member of a religious Order. Many of them selected the Zenshu as representing a phase of Buddhist thought peculiarly suitable to the sternness of their convictions. The Knights Templars renounced worldly attachments and bestowed their goods upon the Order. They denied themselves most of the enjoyments of the military class and were required to spend much of their leisure time in prayer, meditation, and works of charity.

It followed that the refinement of living and the rejection of material entanglements tended to the enlargement of the mystical content in the disposition and character of the knight. He ex-

perienced an inner exhilaration similar to that reported of the cloistered Brotherhoods. The tendency was to strengthen those internal convictions around some suitable and inspiring symbolism. In time, knighthood became a significant spiritual sect, and, like other lay Orders, gained for itself a kind of autonomy. In other words, it assumed the proportions of an inclusive and sufficient religious system, which drew to itself members of a nominally warlike class seeking spiritual consolation.

Unfortunately, historians have ignored the deeper issues of knighthood and its effect upon honorable men convinced of the integrity of their profession and regarding themselves as solid soldiers of God. Each class of society brought its offering to the altars of its religions, and to the shrine of his faith the knight brought his sword. Perhaps his cause was not always just, but he served it justly. Probably he was the victim of mass conviction, but he served God and king and country with the highest motives of which he was capable. At least, he recognized that worldly honors brought with them a higher standard of personal conduct. Even in the modern army, when a soldier receives his commission as an officer, it is commonly reported that he has been made a gentleman by an Act of Congress.

In the good old times, it might well be that a knight attained an internal code superior to the morals of the nobility or the dogmas of the clergy. He found little deep and sufficient inspiration among the interests of his contemporaries and selected his associates from those of his own kind and persuasion. Thus the Orders of Chivalry became integrated groups of dedicated men increasing in power and number, and less and less willing to defend the corruptions of their lords. Such groups, already heretical when measured by a prevailing orthodoxy, were inclined toward the Albigensians by natural affinity. The mystical sects were morally and ethically greatly in advance of the prevailing feudalism, and were rapidly



gaining sufficient temporal authority to enforce the reforms which were obviously necessary. The destruction of the Knights Templars was aimed at destroying spiritual and mental liberalism. The result of this struggle can be estimated from the pages of history.

The Japanese Samurai found a religious interpretation to his liking within the body of his faith. The peculiar tolerance of Buddhism and the compatibility of its numerous sects permitted the Ronin to unfold his spiritual potentials without conflict. Such was not possible in Europe, and the Orders of Chivalry formulated their own Christian mysticism in an atmosphere of almost complete secrecy. We may assume, therefore, that the knightly Orders of the Quest revealed the High Mysteries of Christianity as understood by this military priesthood. Such an overconcept was absolutely indispensable, for a man's courage is meaningless unless it serves an adequate conviction. Even the sober warrior could not spend long nights of vigil without feeling the proximity of a world beyond the material sphere. His sincerity, though clumsy and perhaps even stubborn and earthy, brought him close to the threshold of the mystical experience. He seemed to hear the voices of angels, and to see a light shining upon him out of the darkness of the unknown. The voices spoke; visions rewarded his meditations. And because his mind could not escape entirely from the patterns of the familiar, he beheld figures in radiant armor beckoning to him across the void. Thus he became convinced that there was a celestial Order of Knighthood, of which the Archangel Michael was the Grand Master. To serve this spiritual mystery became the highest calling of the Orders of Chivalry.

Wagner based his *Parsifal* libretto upon the *Titurel* legends of the Troubadour and Knight Templar, Wolfram von Eschenbach, who wrote in the opening years of the 15th century. It must not be assumed, however, that the story of the opera unfolds according to

this source material. In Wagner's music drama, *Titurel*, the Grail King, is already dead. *Titurel*'s son, *Frimutel*, the second Grail King, disappears entirely in the Wagnerian version. *Frimutel* had five children, the eldest being *Amfortas*, who succeeded his father in the royal line as the third King of the Grail. *Frimutel* also had at least two daughters, one of whom, *Herzeloide* (the sorrowing heart), was the mother of *Parsifal*. Thus, *Parsifal* himself was the nephew of *Amfortas*, and after the abdication of his uncle was King of the Grail for ten years. Later, after his son *Lohengrin* was murdered, *Parsifal* retired to Asia and disappeared from the cycle of the great myth.

The opera unfolds the spiritual adventure of *Parsifal* and how he attained the kingship of the Grail assembly. The principal characters of the opera are, therefore, *Parsifal*, the Guileless One; *Amfortas*, the sorely wounded king; *Gurnemanz* the aged knight and retainer; *Klingsor*, the black magician; and *Kundry*, a mysterious character partaking of the attributes of *Salome* and *Mary Magdalene*. There are choruses of flower maidens and Grail knights, and the voice of *Titurel*. The settings divide into three groups. In European productions, cycloramas and a moving stage are frequently used to heighten the effect, but at the Metropolitan these are dispensed with. The setting for Act I is the environs of the Grail Kingdom, on the forested sides of *Mont Salvat*, and the Temple itself. The second Act takes place in the castle of *Klingsor* and the gardens of the castle at the foot of the Grail Mountain in Moorish Spain. The third Act returns to the Grail Mountain, and the opera ends in the sanctuary, or shrine, of the Grail.

We quickly detect an indebtedness to the Biblical story of the prodigal son, and a cycle of similar allegories in which the principal character leaves his father's house, descends into darkness and temptation, and finally returns, saddened but wiser. Wagner was a master symbolist, and few opera lovers have examined



with proper care the details and even the apparent contradictions of the drama. It may be useful, therefore, to analyze first the cast of characters in the light of the ancient lore of the Bards and Troubadours.

Parsifal, who never knew his father and whose mother died of a broken heart when he wandered away, represents humanity. More than this, he is the human achievement and assumes the proportions of the Hero of the World. Wagner subtly contrasted Parsifal and Siegfried as symbols, respectively, of the new and the old dispensation.

Parsifal is presented as a naive youth of simple and rustic mind, totally without a knowledge of himself, his origin, or his destiny. He is slow of wit and slower of comprehension. He is a spectator to a divine mystery, but is untouched by its solemnity or its significance. He exists only to wander according to the dictates of his own fancy, and arrives within the boundaries of the Grail Kingdom without knowing even the path he had taken. The knights of the Grail, waiting a promised savior and redeemer, failed to recognize any hopeful signs in the foolish boy, who is little better than a poacher in the hallowed forest of Mont Salvat. Yet, Parsifal was of the royal line of the servants of the Grail, and it was his destiny to attain the kingship. The symbolism of the hero myth is the same in all parts of the world. Humanity wanders according to instinct and appetite through the long, gray dawn of man's becoming. Everywhere there are signs and indications, invitations to self-improvement, but the human being is without the ways and means to appreciate the high calling for which he was fashioned.

Amfortas is the personification of traditional religion. Essentially a noble and upright man, he sought to protect the circle of the knights from the enchantments of Klingsor, the magician of false doctrines. Several of the champions of the Grail had wandered into Klingsor's enchanted garden and had

fallen victim to the illusions of sorcery. To protect his kingdom, Amfortas had taken the Sacred Spear of Longinus, which had pierced the side of Christ, and armed with this mighty relic he had descended into the valley of paganism to destroy Klingsor. Alas! When he hurled the Spear at his adversary, Klingsor seized it and turned its point upon the Grail King, grievously wounding him.

Thus, Amfortas lost both his cause and the holy relic, and had received in his side a wound that would not heal. The knights in their endeavor to help their king had traveled to many distant places in search of medicines and remedies, but none of these were effective. The effort to overcome evil by violence had failed and had brought tragedy to the kingdom of the Quest. Amfortas prayed for death, but he could not die. He must wait for the destined one—the pure of heart who would return the Spear to the sanctuary and attain, by this circumstance, kingship over the knights. Through the symbolism of Amfortas, Wagner attacked the entire concept of human authority in the religious world. Perhaps he remembered how the Crusaders carried the fragment of the true cross to Palestine and promptly lost it to the Saracens.

The aged knight, Gurnemanz, is experience and worldly wisdom long dedicated to the service of truth. He is the mind grown old in the quest for reality. In certain parts of the story, he takes on the attributes of the esoteric tradition itself, and in other sections he is the guide, much like Virgil in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Gurnemanz is ever-hoping for the coming of the promised redeemer, yet he has not the sensitivity of consciousness to recognize Parsifal as the expected hero. The patient and faithful retainer of the Grail instructs the young squires and pages and tells them the story of wonderful things to come, but, when his narration is interrupted by Parsifal, he is uncertain and to a measure dismayed. Hopefully, Gurnemanz brings Parsifal to see



the ceremony of the Eucharist but irritated by the lad's stupidity and indifference, finally drives him from the shrine.

The world-mind, ever-seeking, denies even truth itself if it appears in an unexpected or uncongenial form. Even those essentially sincere are unable to accustom themselves to a revelation which confounds their fixed opinions and conceits. A world long waiting for a Messiah has crucified each teacher who came to it and has rejected spiritual progress in favor of deep-rooted traditions.

Klingsor is equivalent to what the Gospels call "the Prince of this world." He practices the sorcery of the senses, and lures the human soul from its quest for those spiritual treasures which are not of this world. He works the spells of ambition and success, and draws his victim into the magic garden of materiality. He is reminiscent of Satan tempting Jesus with the kingdoms of this world. Klingsor is resolved to destroy the circle of the Grail, which he knows must either be vanquished or it will sometime overthrow the power of ignorance.

To accomplish his end, Klingsor employs what Goethe calls "the eternal feminine" in the form of Kundry. According to one legend, she is the daughter of Herodotus, who must wander the earth seeking forgiveness for causing the death of John the Baptist. Klingsor controls Kundry with the aid of his infernal arts, and at his command she seduces the knights or beguiles them with the pleasures of the enchanted garden.

Kundry is the most complicated and remarkable of the Wagnerian inventions. By nature she longs to become a servant of the Grail, and she is one of those who traveled about the world seeking a remedy for the wound of Amfortas. Like the legendary character, the Wandering Jew, she can find no internal peace or rest until she receives forgiveness for the sin which she carries in her heart. Sometimes she appears a mad woman dressed in the skins of

snakes—a strange, frightened creature hovering in the background of the Grail ceremonies, or hiding herself in the forests of Mont Salvat.

She cannot resist the magic of Klingsor, although she pleads piteously with him not to force her to injure or destroy. Once under his control, however, she appears as a beautiful and radiant creature, the queen of his magic paradise. She is served by a bevy of flower maidens, and is reminiscent of Venus in Wagner's *Tannhauser*. Her dual nature and the circumstances which cause it are recognized by the knights and they make no effort to harm her.

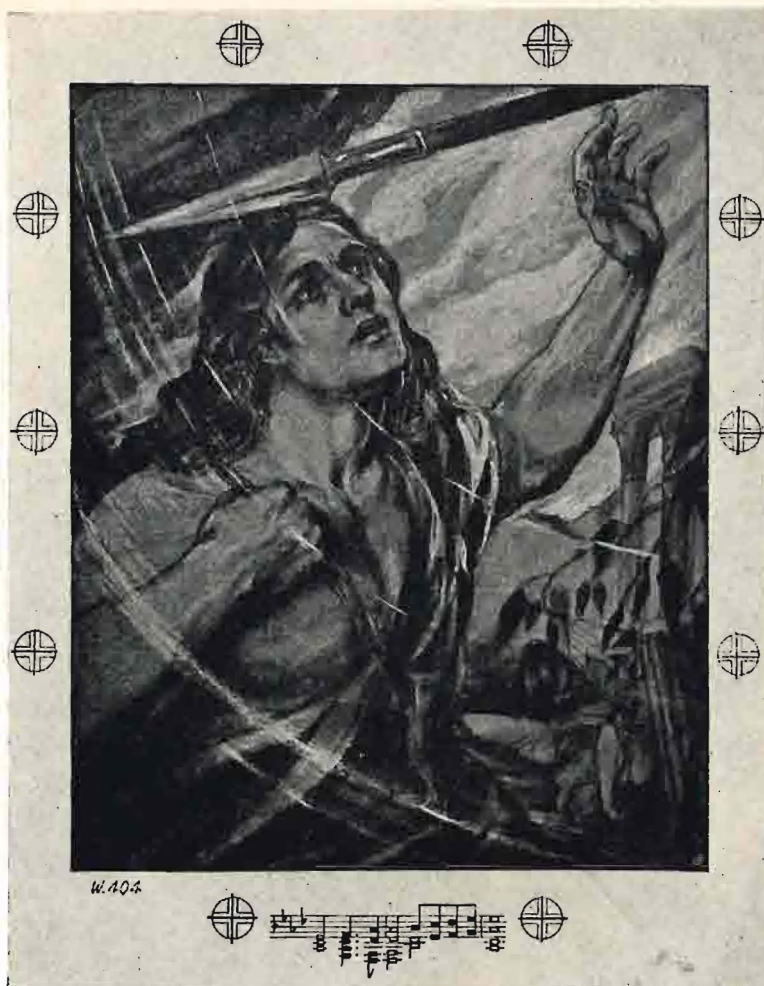
As the human soul, or psyche, Kundry is forced to serve two masters. By choice she would dedicate herself to the works of the spirit, but under the pressure of the mortal mind she must become the instrument of man's earthly disasters. She has a strange immortality, and her name, Kundry, is so close to the Hindu word *kundalini* that we can have no doubt as to the meaning intended. The kundalini, or Kundali Shakti, is the feminine attribute of Universal Consciousness. In Yoga and Tantra it is called the Serpent Power, or the Fire Mist. Kundry is dressed in the skins of snakes, and advanced students of the Yogic disciplines will have little difficulty in the interpretation of her riddle.

To summarize the elements of the spiritual drama, we can arrange them in the following table:

1. The divine spirit, Titurel
2. The divine soul, Amfortas
3. The human spirit, Parsifal
4. The human mind, Gurnemanz
5. The human soul, Kundry
6. The etheric double, the enchanted garden
7. The material world and the human personality, Klingsor

The drama which unfolds around these characters summarizes the fall and redemption of the human spirit. Because of the compression of the theme,





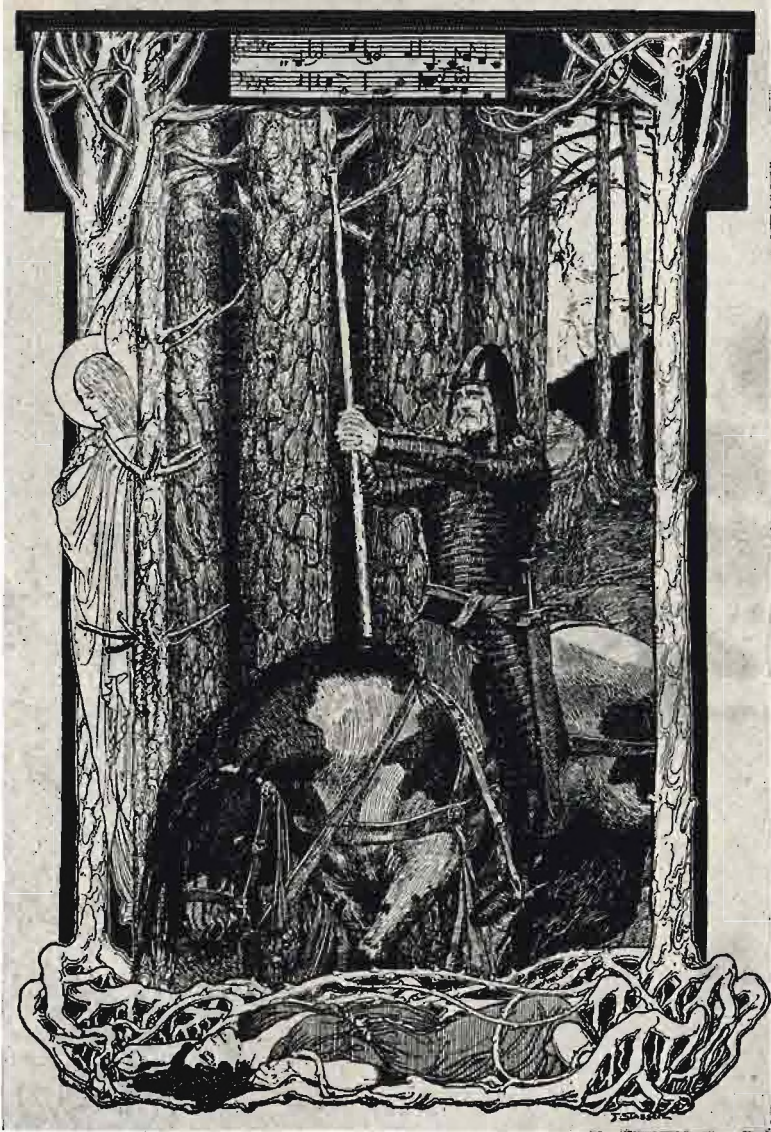
PARSIFAL GRASPING THE HOLY SPEAR WHICH HAS  
BEEN HURLED AT HIM BY KLINGSOR,  
THE MAGICIAN





PARSIFAL AS THE YOUNG HUNTER, FROM A  
COLLECTION OF GERMAN COSTUME PLATES





PARSIFAL, IN BLACK ARMOR AND BEARING THE  
HOLY SPEAR, RETURNING TO THE  
TEMPLE OF THE GRAIL





PARSIFAL HEALING THE WOUND OF AMFORTAS,  
THE GRAIL KING, DURING THE CELEBRATION  
OF THE GRAIL RITES



each of the persons of the drama plays several parts according to the various levels or planes which occur in the symbolism. Altogether, the opera is a Mystery ritual, much like the sacred dramas of Eleusis and Thebes. Only when so considered and experienced can the fullness of the import be accepted as as experience of consciousness.

Parsifal is introduced in the first Act as an irresponsible young hunter who has slain with his arrow the sacred swan, the bird of mystic verse. Reproached for this impious action by Gurnemanz, he is at first indifferent, but is later sufficiently impressed to break his bow, and promise that he will not again hunt in the forest. Gurnemanz, ever-hoping that this guileless lad is the one promised, interrogates the youth and finds him completely unlearned. Soon a procession of knights on the way to the castle of the Grail for the high ceremony of Good Friday passes nearby, and in the midst of the procession is a litter bearing the wounded king, Amfortas. Kundry rushes forward with a new remedy she has discovered, but, like all the others, it fails, and the dejected knights continue on to the ceremony in the Temple above. Hoping that the Mystery of the Eucharist will stir some mystic depths within Parsifal, Gurnemanz leads him up the rocky sides of the mountain and permits him to stand in the shadow of one of the columns of the sanctuary while the ritual of the Grail is enacted.

Amfortas, whose agony is increased when he must serve as the high priest of the Sacred Cup, reluctantly performs the rite. The Cup is illumined from within by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove hovers over the chalice. Gurnemanz watches, but there is no flicker of understanding or appreciation in the eyes of the young Parsifal. At last convinced that the lad is a hopeless doddard, Gurnemanz pushes him from the temple, calls him a gander, and suggests that he go in search of a goose.

The second Act is divided into two scenes. As the curtain rises, Klingsor is seated on the rampart of his castle, surrounded by the implements of magic and sorcery. Before him is a metal mirror. By spells and invocations, the sorcerer calls Kundry and requires her to seduce Parsifal. Klingsor, by his prophetic conjurations, is aware that the untutored lad can become the "innocent one," who is to overthrow the power of evil and restore the sovereignty of the Grail Kingdom. Kundry pleads to be released from the terrible task, but finally her resistance is destroyed and she must obey the will of her evil master.

Parsifal is heard approaching, driving Klingsor's dark retainers from the castle walls in headlong flight. Slowly the ramparts of the castle sink into the earth and disappear, and in their place appears a luxurious garden filled with tropical vegetation. On the wall of the garden stands Parsifal, gazing about him in astonishment. Flower girls in Oriental costumes invite him to the pleasures of the phantom world, but he remains unmoved by their attractions and completely unaware of the sinister net of enchantment that is being cast upon him.

Kundry appears, dismisses the flower maidens, and appeals in various ways to his imagination and emotions. She knows his true origin and the circumstances of his birth and childhood, and, when she believes that she has won his confidence, begins her amorous advances. Kundry is now a beautiful and radiant woman and appears temporarily to be accomplishing Klingsor's purpose. But at her first kiss, something completely unexpected occurs. Parsifal suddenly feels the stab of Amfortas' wound in his own side, and in that moment he shares in the agony of the afflicted Grail king. His heart is touched by a strange and deep compassion, and the darkness and uncertainty is transformed by a flood of inner light and wisdom. He casts Kundry away, and she, enraged



at his rejection of her charms, cries out to Klingsor for aid.

The magician appears on the steps of his Oriental palace, and, realizing that his plans have miscarried, hurls at Parsifal the Sacred Spear. Instead of striking the young man, the Spear floats above his head, surrounded by a ring of light. Parsifal seizes it by the shaft and, raising the shining point, makes the sign of the cross. Immediately a terrible commotion occurs. The enchanted garden withers and dies; the castle falls into a horrible ruin; the spirits of evil disappear; the power of Klingsor is broken. Holding aloft the Sacred Lance, Parsifal turns for a moment to Kundry, who lies nearby, saying: "Thou know'st—where only we shall meet again." He then leaves the stage and the gray mist that hangs over the withered scene.

The third Act returns the setting to the domains of the Grail. It is Good Friday, and aged Gurnemanz, who is now very feeble with years, is shown emerging from his little hermitage. He hears someone moaning softly in a nearby thicket and finds Kundry in a strange stupor. She has been in this condition ever since her release from the enchantment of Klingsor. The aged knight finally succeeds in waking her, and she goes about the menial tasks which symbolize her service to the Grail. This is the scene of the Good Friday music, which is some of the loveliest in the opera.

Kundry comes to the door of the hermitage, bearing upon her shoulder a water vessel. As she comes to the nearby spring to fill it, she sees someone approaching through the forest. She points toward the stranger, calling him to the attention of Gurnemanz. Parsifal enters, clothed entirely in black armor, and with the visor of his helmet closed. He carries the Spear, the tip of which is lowered, and walking forward slowly as one in a dream, he seats himself by the side of the spring. Gurnemanz does not recognize his armored visitor, but attempts to extend hospitality. Parsifal

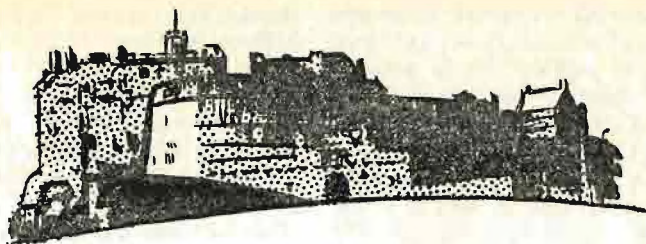
does not speak, but after a little while rises, thrusts the Spear by its lower end into the ground, and, placing his sword and shield before it, removes his helmet and kneels in silent prayer before the Spear. In that instant, Gurnemanz whispers softly to Kundry: "He who, long since, laid low the swan."

As one waking from a daze, Parsifal slowly rises, recognizes Gurnemanz, and gives thanks that at last, after long wandering, he has found once more the castle of the Grail. Exhausted and overcome by emotion, Parsifal returns to the hillock beside the spring, and Gurnemanz anoints his head with water which he has taken in the hollow of his hand. Kundry kneels at the feet of Parsifal, which she washes in the waters of the spring, and, having anointed them with the mysterious substance from a golden flask, she dries his feet with her hair.

This entire scene is obviously patterned upon the account given in the Gospels of the Magdalene washing the feet of Christ. The returned Parsifal is now bearded with long, brown hair hanging on his shoulders, and in the plain white robe, which was beneath his armor, his appearance is decidedly Christlike. Gurnemanz brings out a mantle of the Grail knights which he places upon Parsifal. The distant bells of the Grail sanctuary are heard softly pealing. Parsifal, holding the Sacred Spear and accompanied by Kundry, follows Gurnemanz up the narrow, rocky path that leads to the temple on the peak of Mont Salvat.

In the final scene in the sanctuary, there is a procession of knights, who take their places at the great circular table which surrounds the altar. The body of the dead Titurel is brought in a draped coffin. The covered shrine of the Grail is reverently placed upon the altar, and the wounded Amfortas is assisted from his litter to the throne behind the Grail. Amfortas, heartbroken at the sight of Titurel's body, and in constant agony from his wound, is unable to perform the ritual. He begs the





knights to slay him and release him from his awful pain.

Parsifal, with Gurnemanz and Kundry, enters unnoticed. He advances and touches the side of Amfortas with the Spear. The Grail King, his wound healed, is overcome by the holy rapture, and Gurnemanz supports him. Parsifal then ascends the altar, and elevates the Grail which glows with internal light. Titurel is reanimated long enough to make the sign of benediction. From the dome of the great Temple, the white dove descends in an aura of heavenly light. Kundry, released from her ancient curse, dies at the foot of the Grail, with the words "I serve." From the mystic heights come the soft voices of angels singing: "Wondrous work of mercy: Salvation to the Saviour!"

Although there is lack of confirming evidence from available biographical sources, the opera itself seems to indicate clearly that Wagner was aware of the great plan of the Philosophic Commonwealth. His symbolism veiled but thinly the ancient accounts of the Lodge of the Adepts and the Invisible Government of the World. We must remember that the folklore and legendry of Germany was rich in the mystical tradition of the Minnesang and the Meistersingers. There was also a heritage from the old alchemists, the Rosicrucians, and other sects which flourished in Europe. Wagner followed closely after the great revival of the Mysteries which began in the 18th century, and found expression in the political dreams of the Illuminists, the later Knights Templars, and the activities of such men as St.-Germain and Cagliostro. Mozart's *Magic Flute* and Goethe's *Faust* also

originated in these secret springs of human idealism.

It has been said that Wagner was the last of the Troubadours, and his sympathy for the Meistersingers is indicated in his glorification of the guilds and the rescuing of the name and memory of Hans Sachs from comparative oblivion. Other phases of Wagner's thinking are exemplified by *The Ring* cycle, *Tannhauser*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tristan*, and even *Rienzi*. It is not reasonable that such profundity and diversity of subtle understanding should have no foundation except a dramatic instinct.

Let us suppose for a moment that Wagner had contacted the mystical tradition as it flourished among his own countrymen. He could certainly become aware of an old and rich body of lore vitalized by innumerable historical and traditional associations. This lore would nourish not only his artistry, but also his mind, and would intensify his social and political convictions which are already rather well-known.

In 20th-century America it is a little difficult to appreciate even 19th-century Europe. The Continental mind, if at all seriously inclined, is far more scholarly and introspective than we might first suppose. The deeper issues of religion and philosophy are acceptable to the European intellectualist and he finds esoteric subjects congenial and stimulating. It is a fact that there are still a number of operating alchemists, cabalists, Hermetic philosophers, and transcendentalists residing quietly in remote parts of Central Europe. They have changed but slightly, and their interests and intents are the same that dominated similar scholars of the 16th and 17th



centuries. In the West we have submerged these considerations and they are represented only by certain pressures below the threshold of consciousness. The very disunity which is a distinguishing characteristic of European thinking has contributed to the survival of small groups, each of which is preserving some ancient tradition or serving some older conviction.

For centuries Europe has nourished a Secret Empire beneath the surface of its untroubled existence. Most of the intellectual liberals have been nourished from the breasts of the Great Diana. In this matter we may speak with some authority and direct experience, and if these esotericists have been able to survive the wars and revolutions of the present century, they were certainly active during the lifetime of Richard Wagner. *The Ring* operas are associated with the mountain Asgard, with its great palace and council hall. Here Wotan and his circle of deities governed the world. Their sanctuary is identical in meaning with the shrine of the Olympian divinities of the Grecians. Medieval Europe was profoundly agitated by the reports about Prester John and his Christian Empire in the heart of innermost Asia. It was to this magnificent sacred city of the East that the Grail was finally taken when Parsifal returned to Asia, as described in the songs of the Troubadours.

According to the Brahmanic Mysteries, the affairs of humankind are administered from the city of the gods upon Mt. Meru, which rises in the invisible etheric atmosphere over the most inaccessible area of the Gobi Desert. The Sacred Gobina, the Golden City in the heart of the lotus, lies to the north beyond the belt of Himavat. The northern Buddhists believe that the King of the World stands upon the shining ramparts of Chang Shambhala, and his agents are distributed throughout the seven islands (continents) of the earth. In every one of the secret religions which lies beneath the exoteric cults of mankind, there is the report of the spiritual hierarchy which sustains

the human program and represents the highest temporal authority upon the planet.

The esoteric tradition explains that from the one great center are sustained the seven schools, or the constellation of seven stars, by which the will of the Great King is given to his children. The locations of these schools and of their legitimate branches and the identities of their initiates are known only to those who have been accepted as novices or neophytes.

The opera *Parsifal* is a reasonably accurate description of the internal structure of the original group from which emerged the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. Each of the schools is a miniature or microcosm of the World Government itself. It was said in the Manifestoes that the House S. S. (*Sancti Spiritus*) stood upon the top of a mountain, called symbolically Parnassus. The sanctuary was inaccessible to the profane, for, like the Courts of Love of the Troubadours, the way to it was guarded by strange hazards. The top of the mountain was forever hidden by clouds of allegory and symbolism; and those who reached the summit, like Parsifal, were led there in a state of dreaming.

The House *Sancti Spiritus* was internally adorned with the heraldic devices of the spiritual knights. There is, explained Lord Bacon, "a solid kind of heraldry." We may infer that the devices were for accomplishments beyond those of the field of battle or the Court of Honor. Each knight-initiate has his spiritual son, his squire, who is preparing to take his place at the appointed time. We hear but little of the Princes of the Mysteries, but we know that the forms of material governments were based upon spiritual counterparts.

The Grand Master of the Knights Templars was the Sovereign Prince over a State without physical boundaries. The Hidden Master of the Rosy Cross was likewise a Sovereign Lord whose kingdom was not of this world, but was in this world for the healing of the nations. The Grail Kings were conveni-



ent symbols of the Princes of the Kingdom of Light. They combined in their persons the attributes of temporal sovereignty and religious authority. They were priest-kings forever, after the Order of the Melchizedeks. In them were combined both the law and the prophets, the two dispensations. The Spear of Longinus reminds us of a similar spear carved with runes, carried by Wotan, the All-father. Wotan's spear was fashioned from a branch cut from the tree of life. What more adequate symbol can be found to represent the power of the human will — that strange internal energy which wounds and then alone can heal the wound that it has given. It is the power of universal law, which saves or destroys according to the integrity of man himself. It is also the secret doctrine, which cannot be profaned or abused without an awful penalty.

Parsifal, of the royal line of the Senaboriden, is one destined for the kingship. At the beginning of the opera, he is the eternal neophyte personifying all the truth seekers of the ages. He is gradually transformed by the mysteries of pain and compassion into the similitude of the Christ. He restores Amfortas, whose wound, incidentally, corresponds with that which Jesus received on the cross, which, in turn, reminds us of the agony of Prometheus. It was Prometheus, the friend of man, who concealed the light of heaven in a hollow reed and brought it down to humankind.

Prometheus is not to be regarded as a fire spirit but as a true culture hero, possibly one of the most ancient deities of the Greeks. The ceremony of conveying fire in a fennel stalk still survives, probably in honor of this deity. According to the original legend, Zeus repented that he had created such a disputatious race as human beings and resolved to destroy those survivors of the Flood, which he had sent in the days of Deucalion. A new and better kind of creature would then be created to inherit the earth. By bringing mortals the mystery of fire, Prometheus frus-

trated the design of Zeus and was punished by being chained to the rocky crest of Mt. Caucasus. A vulture was placed over him to tear at his liver.

In this way Prometheus becomes a prototype of the World Saviour. For the sake of his love for mankind, this deity disobeyed heaven and was sentenced to eternal punishment. He could not be redeemed until he was justified by the very humanity he had loved so well. The legend forms part of certain early Mystery rituals and is adroitly used in the Grail Cycle in connection with Amfortas, who was punished for disobeying the way of heaven even though his intent was righteous. Parsifal as the self-redeemed human ego becomes, in turn, the redeemer of his faith and his world, and releases the universal soul bound to the rock of the cross for love of man.

As the theme unfolds, the Holy Grail itself assumes additional proportions. It is not only the central symbol of the Quest, but in the old legends was regarded as an actual being. The Grail spoke, required, demanded, and bestowed. It selected its own servants, and we soon realize that it stood for a secret or thirteenth person. The Cup itself glows and becomes alive to denote the presence of a divine power. It, therefore, conceals the identity of the secret Grand Master, who is present only at the mystical sacrament of the Eucharist. The nominal Christian assumes the Grail to be the substantial evidence of Christ, but in the Wagnerian version such is not implied. The opera closes with the words: "Salvation to the Saviour." This in itself reveals a grasp of the mystery far beyond that of the average worshiper. As the type of the initiate of the heart doctrine, Parsifal, the Christened man, must perform the ritual by which the Universal Saviour is released. The god who died for man must be raised again by the creature in whose nature the redemptive power of God has voluntarily locked itself. Amfortas is also portrayed with the appearance of Jesus. The bleeding



wound in his side, which can only be healed by the instrument with which it was caused, is the Christian Mystery—the wounded church, which cannot perform the ritual of its own salvation.

According to the symbolism of the Grail Cycle, the knights are sworn together to release Christ from the cross of matter. The Secret Schools are the instrument of the human responsibility. Mankind, coming of age, must accept the burden of its own perfection. Thus it becomes the servant of the dying god, and takes its obligation to perform the works of justice and mercy.

In the Parsifal symbolism, the knights sit in a great semicircle around the altar of the Grail. The intent is obviously a correlation to the Knights of the Round Table and the great Arthurian Cycle. The form of the Temple and its furnishings, like those of the Jewish Tabernacle or the Temple of Solomon the King, show that it represents the universe. We may know, therefore, that we are in the presence of a Universal Mystery. The knights share the bread and wine, following the ancient rituals of the Dionysiac Lodges. They are so arranged that no one has precedence of place over another, for in the Universal Sanctuary all men are equal and governed by a wounded king.

Unfortunately, no complete or literal description has descended to us of the medieval initiation ritual, but we know that the Rosicrucians did celebrate a kind of Mass in which the initiated brethren meeting together formed of themselves a living altar. Like the Mer-cavah, or mysterious chariot of Ezekiel, this altar was a focal point of consciousness. This was symbolized in one Secret Society by the knights extending the blades of their swords which, meeting and overlapping, formed a shining many-pointed star. This, when properly understood, was the star of the Magi. The vibratory zone created by this converging of consciousness was the testimony of the witnesses of the Most High. It was in this place of testimony that the Hidden Master revealed himself.

He came in the midst of those who were gathered together in his name. They were the living church, and they formed the tree which bore the twelve manner of fruit.

The thirteenth adept, of one of the seven great Schools, is symbolized by the light that suddenly glows within the Holy Chalice. The great Cup of Antioch is enclosed within a magnificent chalice, on which the twelve disciples are represented. Thus the Lodge of the initiates itself forms the cup which is to receive the cleansing blood. The thirteenth Brother, known only as the Great Presence, speaks from the light in the Grail, and governs his School without ever revealing his own identity. This is the Pythagorean dodecahedron, or symmetrical solid of twelve surfaces, which the Samian sage declared to be the perfect symbol of the World Mystery.

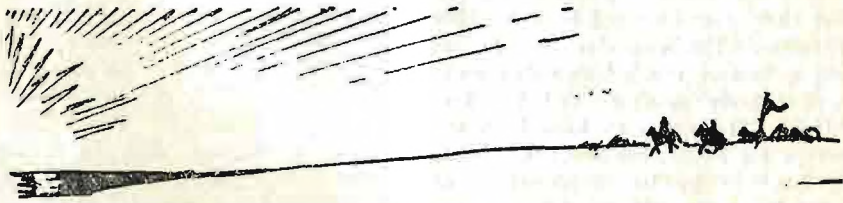
A school practising the rituals of the Grail actually existed in Europe. From it extended a cycle of Secret Orders. These Orders were all keyed to a method of instruction through the use of symbols, rituals, and ceremonies. They were controlled from the "Grail" by the adept who was entrusted with the perfection of the Philosophic Empire. His work was the gradual transformation and transmutation of governments, nations, and states. He has come to be regarded as identical with the entire program of Western civilization as it developed from the great Mystery systems of Greece and Egypt and descended through the collegia and the guilds.

It must not be thought that symbolism is merely a mode of concealment; as such its use would not have any enduring value. The symbol is a means of instruction by which the internal convictions of the individual are objectified. It is a means of drawing forth consciousness which has long been locked by the literal acceptance of the obvious. Symbolism is the language of Nature, and by means of it the creating forces of the universe impress themselves upon the structures of the form-world. These



symbols are the great signatures, through the internal contemplation of which human consciousness experiences the fact of the cosmos. The symbolical schools are peculiarly adapted to the Occidental mind, and from them have flowed the sciences, arts, philosophies, and religions of the West. Something of this sublime concept is captured in the majesty of the Parsifal story and the glory of Wagner's immortal music. Music itself, especially the theory of leitmotifs, of which Wagner was the master, is part of the great symbolic program. As sounds themselves build magnificent forms in space, so symbol-

ism not only transmits to man the high secrets of his own origin and destiny, but also supplies him with the instruments necessary for the release and enlargement of his own creative instincts. From symbols he learns, with symbols he builds, and through symbols he gradually perceives the way of individual and collective redemption. The fantastic designs of the alchemists, the strange patterns of the cabalists, and the elaborate trestle boards of Freemasonry are all parts of one doctrine. This doctrine in essence and substance is under the control of the thirteenth adept of the Wisdom Religion of the West.



## TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS

Even the best proofreaders do not catch them all, and slips that pass in the type are frequently amusing.

A newspaper advertising an *infernal* medicine was duly embarrassed at the resulting comments.

Advertising for short stories, the publisher of a periodical offered \$100 "for the best *tail* for his paper."

A man with some high explosives on his hands offered for sale a large quantity of *funpowder*.

A New York landlord advertised a *louse* for let, with immediate possession.

A new's item relating to a glutton who had strangled on a goose said that the man died of *stuffocation*.

A journal, the *Eclectic Review*, was happily referred to as the *Epileptic Review*.

While Raphael was painting one of his celebrated religious frescoes, two cardinals dropped in and began criticizing his work. "The Apostle Paul has too red a face," said one. Instantly, the indignant painter replied: "He blushes, even in heaven, to see what hands the church has fallen into."



# Mother Shipton

The celebrated prophecies of Mother Shipton must be included among the legacies of tradition. For nearly two hundred years they were communicated orally from one generation to another, and no written account of the seeress or her strange predictions was compiled until the reign of King Charles II. The best edition, enriched with a grotesque representation of the prophetess, was issued by Harris, in London in 1687, and most later works were based upon this text.

Ursula Southiel was born near Knaresborough in Yorkshire, on July 6, 1488. She had the distinction of being the ugliest child ever baptized by the Abbot of Beverley. Tradition described her as having a "stature much larger than common, her body crooked, and her face frightful." She seems to have been the archetype for Halloween witches. Ursula came honestly by her asymmetries of form and feature. Her mother was a demented creature who imagined herself to be the mistress of the devil. Fortunately the Inquisition was not flourishing in those parts or poor Agatha would have perished at the stake. As it was, she developed illusions of grandeur, imagined herself living extravagantly at the expense of Satan, and finally died giving birth to her deformed child. It was generally understood by the ignorant of the region that it was through her infernal paternity that Ursula inherited her prophetic powers, for it is a well-established fact that the devil is a scholar.

Although Ursula's face certainly was not her fortune, she must have had values not immediately apparent. When she was twenty-four years of age she was wooed vigorously by one Toby Shipton, a gallant fellow, by trade a builder. Toby may have been worthy of larger mention, but his claims to fame were completely eclipsed and he is remembered only as the source of the name

Shipton. Nor do we have any detail of the origin of Mother Shipton's prophetic powers. As a girl, she was a charge of the village; that is, she was supported by the parish. In this way she secured whatever education was available, and some have suggested that she may have learned to read and write, but in the light of her time and the locality wherein she dwelt such scholastic attainments appear doubtful.

Her fame probably began in the legends about her birth and in the broad conviction that she was a witch and practiced infernal arts. Once awe is stimulated in the unlettered, a chemistry is established which is conducive to the wonderful and the mysterious. But we cannot dismiss Mother Shipton's prophecies as merely clever conjectures or shrewd observations. Either she did possess a strange skill in foreseeing events or the traditions have been gradually enlarged and extended to supply the substance of an incredible account.

Mother Shipton was famous during her own lifetime and was visited by many of the nobility and gentry. She gained the animosity of Cardinal Wolsey, whom she called the "mitred peacock." She prophesied of him that he should see York but should never enter it.





The Cardinal vowed that when he came into York he would burn the witch. But when he was eight miles from his destination, he was summoned by the king and never returned. A few such predictions, passing like wildfire through the countryside, soon won a large and enthusiastic following, and from that day until the present time the doggerel verses of Mother Shipton are quoted whenever unusual occurrences trouble the affairs of men.

Some examples of the prophetic rhymes indicate that Mother Shipton possessed some gift to pierce the narrow limits of conventional thinking and to anticipate the shape of things to come. Even if these verses are not contemporary, they have been in circulation for centuries and certainly existed in their present form long before the average man had any concept of the true meaning of their contents. As the predictions are mingled with those relating to local events no longer of any interest, we shall select only the pertinent couplets.

"Carriages without horses shall go,  
And accidents fill the world with woe."

"Around the world thoughts shall fly,  
In the twinkling of an eye."

"Water shall yet more wonders do.  
Now, strange yet shall be true,  
The world upside down shall be;  
And gold found at the root of a tree.  
Through hills men shall ride,  
And no horse or ass be by his side.  
Under water men shall walk,  
Shall ride, shall sleep, shall talk.  
In the air men shall be seen,  
In white, in black, in green."

"Iron in the water shall float,  
As easy as a wooden boat.  
Gold shall be found, and found,  
In a land that's not now known."

"Three times shall lovely France  
Be led to dance a bloody dance,  
Before her people shall be free.  
Three Tyrant Rulers shall she see;

Three times the People rule alone;  
Three times the People's hope is gone;  
Three Rulers in succession see,  
Each spring from different dynasty.  
Then shall the worse fight be done,  
England and France shall be as one."

"Taxes for blood and for war  
Will come to every door."

"Over a wild and stormy sea,  
Shall a noble sail,  
Who to find, will not fail,  
A new and a fair countree.  
From whence he shall bring  
A herb and a root,  
That all men shall suit,  
And please both the plowman  
and king."

(NOTE: It is believed that the noble was Sir Walter Raleigh, and that the herb was tobacco, and the root, the potato.)

"The world to an end shall come  
In eighteen hundred and eighty-one."

The last is the most controversial of all Mother Shipton's verses and it is evident that the world did not expire in the year indicated. However, it is the sober opinion of many authorities that the last quarter of the 19th century divided the human experience and brought an entirely new way of life. At this time the shift took place from the agrarian to the industrial concept. It is since this important change that the exaggerated economic pressures of the race have developed. The transference from the ideal of production-for-use to the so-called modern ideal of production-for-profit may date, more exactly than we realize, the beginning of the disintegration of a civilization.

It is believed that Mother Shipton lived to extraordinary age and that on the occasion of her death a stone was erected near Clifton bearing the following epitaph:

"Here lyes she who never ly'd,  
Whose skill often has been try'd;  
Her Prophecies shall still survive,  
And ever keep her name alive."



# A Memorable Discussion

FROM THE CAVES AND JUNGLES  
OF HINDUSTAN

*A Note from the Translator*

The following text is translated from the Russian writings of H. P. Blavatsky which were penned under the name of Radda-Bai. The original of this text was published in the Russian journal, *Russkii Vestnik*, Vol. CLXXXI, February 1886, pp. 792-822, as the fourth chapter of the series entitled "Iz Pescher I Debrei Hindustana" ("From the Caves and Jungles of Hindustan") and followed the chapter on "Mr. Peters and the Goddess," the translation of which appeared in Winter 1949 *Horizon*.

The English text now presented has been translated from the Russian without any deletion, but with one addition—that of the subtitle, "A Memorable Discussion."

Mary G. Langford

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## A MEMORABLE DISCUSSION

BY  
H. P. BLAVATSKY

Mulji's narrative, condensed very much by me but related in great detail by him, came to a close at the dinner hour, that is, five o'clock in the afternoon, of which we were not aware.

An unbearable sultriness lay around us. The day we spent in Dig had been so hot that it was possible to suspect *Surya* of wishing to burn alive all the Jats that worshipped him and along with them also us sinners, who had cursed his overly ardent caresses so frequently.



The scorching rays poured like molten gold over the cupolas and the marble walls of the kiosks and lay like blinding spots on the drowsy waters of the ponds, shooting forth death-dealing darts into the living and the dead. They even drove the flocks of parrots and peacocks, with which the gardens of India teem as our Russian kitchen gardens do with sparrows, to hide in the very thicket of the shrubs. An impenetrable silence lay around us... Everything slept, everything languished and burned...

But even prior to the beginning of the narrative about Mr. Peters, we had crept into the tall, central marble summerhouse that was almost hidden in the densest part of the garden and there, without venturing to leave the blessed shelter we had found, we delighted in its comparative coolness. Surrounded on all sides by the water of a small reservoir in the midst of which it towered, the spacious summerhouse, shaded by creeping aquatic plants, offered us shelter in which we felt neither the great heat nor exhaustion. The shade and coolness for several yards around enticed us. An inferno blazed beyond the boundary of the miniature mirror-like pond, and the ground cracked and split from the fiery kisses



of the frightful spring sun, whose rays licked the still luxuriant, though seared, vegetation of the garden with their flaming tongues. The roses crumpled and fell; even the lotus and water lily curled the edges of their hardy thick petals into little tubes, as if fastidiously avoiding the burning touch. Only the orchids, "the flowers of passion,"\* raised their variegated, insect-like little cups to drink in this fiery stream as other flowers drink in the cool dew...

What a delightful, unique garden! Laid out on a bare cliff in a space of about two hundred and eighty yards deep and about one hundred and seventeen wide, it includes within itself more than two hundred large and small jets and fountains.

The superintendent, a sugary old man who resembled a eunuch, assured us that "not all the jets were spouting," that many were choked up and damaged, but that on the day of the reception, if I am not mistaken, for the Prince of Wales in Dig, there had been six hundred of them. But we were completely satisfied with even two hundred. For several rupees, the gardeners made it possible for us to be in the midst of a delightful coolness the entire day and to stroll, on a moonlit night, along an avenue bordered by two continuous rows of tall gushing fountains instead of trees. Nothing could be equal to the effect of these two walls of water spray scintillating in the moonlight like diamonds and iridescent with all the tints of mother-of-pearl. A wonderful little corner, but one that has been forgotten by everybody, and which is visited by no one except Anglo-Indian officials passing through accidentally but always willing to accept the entertainment of the native princes and, in gratitude, to slander them at all the crossroads.

The Maharaja of Bhurtpore himself does not as much as peep into Dig.

The potentate of the Jats, a nursling of the government, prefers the fizzle of champagne to the murmuring of all the fountains of his own charming palace, and there is no sweeter melody for him than the sound from a bottle of cognac being uncorked...

Thus, the shady old garden grows rampant in its wild beauty, deserted by people but, on the other hand, left at the complete disposal of a whole army of magnificent, though also wild, peahens. Hundreds of this favorite bird of Juno (who is called *Sarasvati* in India) fill the paths, strolling about pompously with their long tails sweeping the dust accumulated through the years. They stud the trees from top to bottom and, thanks to their presence, the old garden from afar frequently takes on the appearance of an enchanted wood in a fairy story. The shaggy trees, flooded by the dazzling sunlight, seem to breathe while moving and swaying, and from behind their dense foliage, thousands of sparkling curious eyes peep out, reflecting hues of sapphire and gold... These are the little eyes scattered over the tails of the peacocks moving in the branches.

Coming out onto the terrace into the garden, I could not for some time account to myself for this strange phantasmagoria and descended the steps in order to examine the wonderful spectacle more closely. My curiosity was immediately punished by "assault and battery." The ponderous flight of a peacock that had slipped off a tree and been frightened by my sudden appearance, interrupted my reflections about the wonders of India, having knocked the topee off my head and me off my feet. I solaced myself by an exploration of the garden, but Babu took revenge for my fall by plucking half a dozen feathers from the tail of another peacock, which had not been guilty of anything, "in remembrance of Dig"...!

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\* *Passion flower*, so named because this species of orchids opens fully only in the heat of midday, and not at all because its petals, supposedly, bear a resemblance to the cross, nails, and crown of thorns, as many assert.



The garden is cut across in all directions by narrow paths, which are cleaned and freed of accumulated muck only before the arrival of "notable guests," as the gardener explained to us and from which we deduced with our discerning perspicacity that we did not belong to this fortunate category. In every corner, as well as in the heart of the garden, the motionless waters slumber peacefully in their marble niduses under blankets of thick slime. The fountain reservoirs, the ponds, and the miniature lakes have become a green mess, and only the waters of the ponds nearest the palace are purified, adding much to the general beauty of this little corner. In spite of the obvious neglect, particularly beautiful was the octagonal basin in the center of the garden with the cool kiosk that sheltered us from the heat. Surrounded by smaller basins with tall jets spurting forth from baskets of luxuriant tropical flowers, we were blissfully happy the whole day, sitting in the kiosk as if in a submarine kingdom. Four avenues of jets led to the pond, cutting it crosswise, and four small bridges of openwork marble led to the kiosk.

Exhausted by conversation, we now sat in silence, each one of us giving himself up to his own thoughts and pursuits. I read, thinking more of Thakur than of the contents of the book; the Colonel slept. Sitting on a bench at the wall, with his head thrown back into the dense creeping verdure from behind which his long gray beard protruded, our esteemed chief, Colonel O., snored lightly. Narayana and Mulji squatted on the floor, but Babu had perched himself in caryatid fashion on the pedestal of some pulled-down and missing idol, and also slept.

So we sat, drowsy and silent, without moving for rather some time. Finally, towards half past five, the slumbering garden began to awaken gradually; the heat abated, the peacocks crawled out of their corners, and flocks of golden-green parrots called to each other from the tree tops... Yet a few more minutes—and the sun would disappear beyond

the boundary of the briny seas and nature, exhausted for the day, would rest till the following morning, would cool off till the next fiery ordeal.

I abandoned my book to observe how everything around us began to breathe and move. The garden was changing from a Daniel's den into the grove of a classical idyl; it lacked only the playful, dancing nymphs and the gay pipes of Pan. The transparent liquid of the pond now reflected only the light-blue sky and the vain peacocks, perched for the night on the carved balustrades of the little bridge. In preparation for their coming slumber, the peacocks fluttered around with their tails like Spanish ladies with their fans, opening and closing them over and over again, and admiring their reflections in the water. Finally, the sun, flashing its last golden sparks, vanished and a gentle breeze enveloped us. It was so pleasant, so cool in the summerhouse that we definitely refused to dine in the stuffy halls of the palace and decided to ask for *khana* (dinner) in the arbor, upon which mission we sent Babu as an envoy.

Under the pretense of fearing vengeance from the peacock whose feathers he had plucked and which, according to his own assertion, he recognized in one of those perched on the balustrades, the restless Bengali selected the most direct way, instead of the path over the little bridge, by diving impetuously straight into the pond from the pedestal. The sudden splash of water awakened and frightened the sleeping Colonel, who made immediate and anxious inquiry as to whether there were any danger of Babu's drowning.

"Better to drown than to risk the vengeance of a *werewolf*," shouted the scoffing skeptic, snorting and choking with water.

"Of what *werewolf*?" inquisitively asked our President, who had been set at ease by the fact that the water barely reached Babu's chest.

"Why, of the cursed peacock! You see, it is the very same *werewolf* that



flew down to us onto the veranda at Bhurtapore yesterday evening!" shouted the Bengali as he walked across the slimy bottom of the pond with difficulty. "I myself saw him wink to Mulji about me."

"He is always throwing stones into my garden," commented "the General," frowning. "Has this *nastika* ever really believed in anything? He is constantly laughing at everything and everybody."

"Well, now you, too, can laugh at him. Just look at that figure!" I replied, bursting into laughter.

Really, Babu presented a most curious sight. He had crawled out of the mire with great effort and, having clambered up onto the high parapet of the pond, left large puddles of greenish mud along the white marble behind him. Covered with slimy weeds and mud, he had lost all human semblance.

"You look like a drowned man, my poor Babu," I laughed at him. "But is it possible to feel such attachment for water! This is the second time for you today. See that you do not become a water *pisacha* after death and, also, that you do not drown sometime..."

"What I was, that I am, and that I will be," I received in answer a quotation from the aphorisms of his all-denying sect. "Dust I am and dust I shall be, and drowning, they say, is a most pleasant and easy death, *Mam Sahib*..."

"Everybody sees what you *are*. What you *will be*, I do not know. But that you were by all means a Newfoundland pup in your former existence, that is true," replied Mulji, avenging himself.

But Babu did not hear the remark made through clenched teeth at his expense. Somewhat embarrassed by his appearance, he took to his heels and

dashed straight toward the house.

Had I possessed the gift of foresight, as Narayana somehow imagined that I did, I would have sooner swallowed my tongue than to have uttered the last comment made by me. Poor, gay, unconcerned boy!... Did he think then that an early and so agonizing a death awaited him in the turbid yellow waves of the Ganges? To this very day I cannot recall without emotion poor Babu and the happy weeks of travel we had spent together, though five years have since passed and almost two years from the day of the fateful event. How frequently, too frequently, since that time have I dreamt in my disquieting sleep of that emaciated, little, and semi-childish figure all covered with dark green slime from the pond of Dig! In my dreams it appears as if its once sparkling eyes, which used to be full of good-natured merriment but are now glassy and lifeless, stare at me, and I again hear clearly, as if in reality, the familiar, chuckling voice in reply to my unconscious prophetic warning, "Do not drown sometime," the equally prophetic answer: "*What I was, that I am*... Dust I am, dust I shall be..."—and I awaken trembling with horror at the recollection!...\* In thinking over the past, I often ask myself the question: "Is it really so, that all that remains of him is...*dust*?" And immediately I recall an argument closely related to this silent enigma of death, which has still not been solved by our European thinkers, an argument between Narayana and Babu, and Thakur's replies to our questions. This argument started between them only a few days after the memorable, for me, day spent in Dig.

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\* The poor young lad drowned in the year 1883 in the most awful and, at the same time, stupid manner. Between the Dera-Dun and Hardwar, the Ganges is not a river, but a shallow and exceedingly rapid stream. It is crossed over at one place by means of a small bridge, and he who has a horse leads it by the reins close to the bridge and through water which does not reach even the knees of the animal. But Babu, in spite of warning, conceived a desire to cross the river on horseback. The horse stumbled and fell down; Babu became entangled in the stirrups and could not free himself. The stream, according to the accounts, rolled both of them along more than a mile to the basin of the waterfall, where the rider and horse both perished. His death, it goes without saying, was attributed to "the anger of the gods!"



I shall relate the remarkable conversation in extenso, hoping that for the serious reader it will be interesting, of course not because it has settled the questions that have bothered me a long time, but because it unfolds the original point of view of the Vedantins on life after death, on its mysteries, and on the soul of man in general.

For the purpose of a fuller explanation, I permit myself to say a few preliminary words and thus make the conversation which follows more intelligible to the reader. Otherwise, for those unfamiliar with the philosophy of the Vedantins (of the *secret* school), and particularly with the complex theory of the soul and its significance in eternity, it would be extremely difficult to follow the many different appellations "of the spiritual man." They are innumerable, as are also the names of their mask-gods, because each *aspect* of the soul (or, more accurately, of the united spiritual *aggregate*, which is called by the Vedantins the *real* man or "the spiritual individuality," whereas his perishable body or *earthly* personality is considered an *illusion*), each qualitative modification of the soul has its own particular descriptive name. For example, they separate "the earthly personality" into three main groups of: spirit, soul, and body, and then subdivide these groups into seven compound powers or principles, of which the first two, spirit and "the divine soul" (the seat of the spirit), are impersonal and quality-less *per se*, and the remaining five are called *ḥosa*, that is, "sheath" or the envelope of the various spiritual and earthly qualities of man, therefore, personal and qualitative. Thus *manomaya ḥosa*, in verbal translation, would be: "sheath of the illusory cognition," that is, seat or receptacle of the purely earthly and, for that very reason, of the *illusory* conceptions of man. This *ḥosa* is the envelope of the conceptions of his *earthly mind* in conjunction with the activity

of our five sense organs, which, in obscuring the pure divine mind with their gross earthly conceptions, thus transform every truth into a *mirage*.

This theory is particularly difficult for those who, while admitting the creation of a separate soul for each man, at the same time reject the theory of his numerous reincarnations and, thus, repudiate *emanations*, that is to say, the very essential point of the pantheistic teaching of India. In reading, for example, about the *septenary* constitution of man, it would be possible to suppose that there reside in us seven personalities, each one distinct from the other ("seven demons," according to the expression of one Russian theosophist), which appear in their numerical sequence like the thin skin in an onion, becoming more ethereal and more subjective in proportion to the degree of their distance from the outer, and the coarsest, envelope, that is, from the body. But the philosophy of Vedanta preaches nothing of the kind. All these *ḥosas* are devised for the purpose of elucidating its doctrine about the complete unity of Parabrahman, the basis and the *substance* of the entire *manifested* universe. If this doctrine of the begetting of the qualitative universe from quality-less spirit were not explained through emanations, then this doctrine would remain completely incomprehensible to the pantheists themselves.

Spirit is one and indivisible, but the souls of mankind represent a countless number of separate units. These souls are emanations, "spirit from spirit." But as the impersonal and quality-less *Unconditioned Be-ness* cannot manifest personally, then the reverse side of Parabrahman, *Mulaprakṛiti*,\* his coeternal power or energy, the *root* of all that which exists, presents itself. Inseparable from Parabrahman, it makes up together with him the *invisible universe*. That which is separated is not *Mulaprakṛiti*, but only the light or the radi-

\* *Mulaprakṛiti*—literally, "the root of matter," that is, the primordial essence of substance. But since Parabrahman is *All*, then this root, also, is that very Parabrahman.



ance from "the light of the universe," which is the emanation that becomes the *visible* universe. But here again a difficulty arises: where is there a place for the *visible* universe? How can anything be put in a place that is already occupied, even in *boundless* space, if this space is in fact the Omnipresent *Sat* itself? Finally, how can qualitative substance be abstracted from quality-less spirit, that is, from that which appears as *nothing* in our concept?

The Vedantins solve this difficulty thus: the *visible* universe is nothing other than the *delusion* of our senses, a temporary illusion of the equally temporary and deceptive concepts of *earthly* man, who himself is an illusion and one *kosha* or sheath of the spiritual and, therefore, of the only *real* individuality. The visible world and objective man *do not exist* in reality; for everything that is visible and experienced by means of the testimony of our five senses is *self-deception*, because only the one *Sat* exists and is *all*.

But before changing from *real* "nothing" even into an *illusory* "something," such a transformation must take place gradually. "The radiance from the light" is, nevertheless, quality-less Para-brahman and, consequently, incapable of action. And thus the *shadow*—of course, also "illusory" for a shadow does not exist without a body, and Para-brahman is bodiless—begins to transform in the gradual differentiation of its unconscious activity (*nota bene* unconscious only in our conditioned understanding about self-consciousness) from that which is quality-less and impersonal into that which is qualitative and personal, namely, into the visible worlds at first, and afterwards also into man. But man, as also the worlds, could not have been created *at a stroke* even in that coarse envelope which we *imagine* to see in him. He was formed and organized in the following order:

#### Group I

1. *Brahma* or *Atman*, a ray of Para-brahman, or spirit.

2. *Buddhi*—his *vahana* or receptacle, the carrier of the spirit; the highest or divine soul.

(This dual unit is the *root* of man, though in our understanding this *impersonal* and *quality-less* unit in itself appears a pure *abstraction*. Its identity starts being put together and being outlined only after the course of many incarnations, as *buddhi*, in order to acquire even spiritual qualities, must, while carrying them away after the death of the earthly personality, take them from the first principle of Group II—*Manas*.)

#### Group II.

3. *Manas*—the seat of the mind. In conjunction with *Kama-rupa* (see below), this is the actual earthly personality, the *Ego* of man or of the body inhabited by it, and is called the *human* or *earthly* soul when it is understood as separate from *Buddhi* or "the divine soul." However, in union with *Buddhi* it is called *Sutratman* (thread-soul), as it alone of this group of three, while changing only its personal qualities, follows the first group in all of its earthly incarnations.

4. *Kama-rupa*—"the seat of desires." This principle survives man, but together with

5. *Mayavi-rupa*, "the phantom body" or the *double* of the personality, disappears with time. After the death of man, these 4th and 5th principles become *pisachas* or those "materialized spirits" in which the spiritualists see the *souls* of their deceased, and the Brahmanas—*demons*.

#### Group III.

6. *Jiva*, or life: "the vital principle."
7. *Sthula-sarira*, or the physical body of man, the mask of the soul.

This group is the most transitory of all "the illusions" and disappears without leaving any traces after its destruction.



Thus we see that the three groups with their seven divisions are all summarized in the "divine soul." The impersonal quality-less unit has to acquire individuality and spiritual qualities from each new *manas*, that is, from the rational *Ego*, and not in one, but in an innumerable series of its incarnations. Before this unit can be ready to become a *godlike* personality, worthy to unite even temporarily with *Sat*\* and cease being an "illusion," it must pass through all stages of human suffering; experience personally all that is experienced by helpless humanity; make personal efforts toward cleansing itself of earthly filth while extracting from the personalities inhabited by it only the highest spiritual qualities, *if such are to be had*; and be tested like gold by fire. Each new incarnation is a new step toward purification and perfection. All this is in order that at the end of centuries all past humanity can also live according to truth in God, as God shall live in future humanity, "in the seventh," teach the Vedantins of the *secret school*, calling present humanity only the *fifth*.

Now the following conversation with Thakur will be more intelligible to the reader.\*

"Master," asked Narayana of Thakur in the midst of the heated argument with poor Babu, "what is he saying, and is it possible to listen to that!... that exactly nothing remains of a man after his death? That his body, so he claims, simply decomposes into its component elements and that which we call soul and he, 'temporary self-consciousness,' will evaporate, vanishing like vapor from boiling water which has cooled?"

"What is there so strange in that? You see, Babu is a *Charvaka*\* and, therefore, says only that which any other *Charvaka* will tell you."

"But, you see, *Charvaka* lie! There are others who believe that the real man is not his physical envelope, but consists of his mind, the seat of his self-consciousness. But can self-consciousness ever forsake the soul after our death?"

"In *his case* it can," answered Thakur calmly, "because *he sincerely and firmly believes in that which he now professes*."

Narayana threw an amazed and perplexed glance at Thakur, but Babu, who was rather afraid of the latter, cast us a triumphant smile.

"But how so? Why the Vedanta teaches that 'the spirit of Spirit' is deathless and that the soul of man does not die in Parabrahman. Is there possibly an exception?"

"In the fundamental laws of the spiritual world there can be no exceptions, but there are rules for those who see and rules for those who do not."

"I understand that. But in that case, as I told him, the 'complete and final disappearance of his self-consciousness' is no more than an aberration of the blind man who, without seeing the sun, denies it but will perceive it with his spiritual eyes after death."

"He will perceive nothing. Having denied it during life, he will not see it beyond the grave."

Having noticed that Narayana was dreadfully perturbed and also that both the Colonel and I stared at him in expectation of a more explicit answer, Thakur continued, obviously unwillingly.

"You speak of 'spirit from Spirit,' about *Atman*, and confuse spirit with the soul of the mortal, that is, with *Manas*. Undoubtedly, Spirit is deathless, for it is without beginning and, therefore, without end. But the conversation now is not about spirit, but about the

\* *Sat*—a word almost untranslatable into a European language. Here *Sat* signifies the *One-Existent reality*, outside of which everything is only illusion, self-deception. *Sat* is the eternal, boundless *essence* of everything in eternal and limitless space where there is no room for anything except for *Sat*. In short, *Sat* is the One Be-ness of quality-less and unconditioned spirit—*unmanifested* divinity.

† (See *The Key to Theosophy*, 1889, pp. 155-164—Translator.)

‡ *Charvaka*—a sect of Bengal materialists.



self-conscious human soul. You confuse it with the former, and Babu denies both that and the other, spirit as well as soul. Both of you misunderstand each other."

"I understand him, but..."

"You do not understand me. I shall try to express myself more clearly. The whole point of your question reduces itself to the following: you wish to find out whether the complete loss of self-consciousness and self-awareness is possible even in the case of a deep-rooted materialist? Is that not so?"

"Yes, because he completely denies everything that constitutes undeniable truth for us... in which we all believe sacredly."

"Very well. To this, I, believing just as sacredly as you in our teaching which calls the after-death period, that is, the interval between two lives, but a *temporary* condition, reply positively by saying: whether it continues for a year or a million years, this intermission between two acts of the illusion of life, this state beyond the grave can, without any transgression of the law, prove to be completely like that state in which the human being is found at the time of a deep swoon. Babu, therefore, in his case is right."

"But why, and how, when the law of immortality does not permit, as you tell us, any exceptions?" inquired the Colonel.

"Certainly, it does not: *for all of that which really exists*. He who has studied *Mundaka Upanishad* and *Vedantasara* ought not even to ask..."

"But *Mundaka Upanishad* teaches particularly," timidly commented Narayana, "that between *Buddhi*\* and *manas*,\* as between *Iswara* and *prajna*,\* there is,

in fact, no more difference than *between a forest and its trees, between a lake and its waters.*"

"Perfectly true because one or even a hundred trees that have withered from the loss of the life-giving sap, or that have been pulled out by the roots, cannot prevent the forest from being that very forest."

"Yes... but *buddhi* represents the forest in this comparison and *manas-taijasa*,\* the trees. If the former is immortal, then how can *manas-taijasa*,\* being the same as *buddhi*, lose consciousness completely until its new incarnation? That is what perplexes me."

"In vain. If only you would take the trouble not to confound the abstract representation of the whole with its occasional modifications. Remember, that if we can, in speaking of *buddhi*, say 'it is unconditionally immortal,' then it is impossible to say the same about *manas*, or about *taijasa*. Neither one nor the other exists apart from the divine soul because the first is a qualitative attribute of the earthly personality, and the second is the same as the first only with the reflection of *buddhi* in it. *Buddhi*, for its part, would remain only *impersonal* spirit without this element in it, which it has borrowed from the human soul and which conditions and makes of *Buddhi* something *apparently separate from the Universal soul* for the entire duration of the cycle of human incarnations. Had you said, therefore, that *buddhi-manas* could neither die nor lose consciousness either in eternity or during the transitory periods, then, according to our teaching, you would have been right. But to apply this axiom to its qualities is the same as if you insisted that, since Colonel O.'s soul is immor-

\* "The divine soul" of man.

† *Manas*, as the seat of the earthly mind, gives a conception of the world that is based on the evidence of this mind and not spiritual perception.

‡ *Iswara*—the collective consciousness of the *manifested* divinity, *Brahma*; and *prajna* is its individual wisdom.

§ *Taijasa*, "the radiant"—as a result of its union with *buddhi*; *manas* which has been illumined by the light "of the divine soul."

5 *Manas-taijasa*—"radiant mind," the human reason illumined by the light of the spirit; and *buddhi-manas* is the divine revelation plus human intellect and self-awareness.



tal, then the red of his cheeks must also be immortal. It appears that in your comprehension you have obviously confused the essence with the manifestation. You have forgotten that in union with *manas* or the 'human' soul alone, the radiance of *taijasa* itself becomes a question of time, just as both immortality and consciousness beyond the grave become qualities wholly conditional for the *earthly* personality of man, depending on the conditions and beliefs that were created by the personality itself during the life of its body. *Karma* (the law of retribution) functions continually; *and we reap in the world beyond the grave only the fruits of that which we ourselves have sowed in this life.*"

"But if after the dissolution of my body, my *Ego* can find itself in a state of complete unconsciousness, then what punishment for the sins of my life can there be in this *for me?*" asked the Colonel, thoughtfully stroking his beard.

"Our philosophy teaches that punishment overtakes the *Ego* only in a future incarnation and that only recompense for *unmerited* suffering which has been endured in earthly life awaits us immediately beyond the grave. As you see, the entire punishment *consists of the absence of recompense, of complete loss of awareness of one's own happiness and peace.* *Karma* is the child of the terrestrial *Ego*, the fruit of the actions of its personality, visible to all, and *even of the thoughts and motives* of the spiritual *I*. But it is also the tender mother who heals the wounds inflicted by her in the previous existence before scourging the *Ego* anew by inflicting fresh ones. If in the life of the mortal there is not a grief or a misfortune which is not the fruit and direct result of transgression in his preceding existence, then on the other hand, not having preserved

the least recollection about this in the present life and feeling that he does not merit such punishment and, consequently, suffers *unjustly*, as a result of this alone the human soul is worthy of comfort and complete rest and peace in the life beyond the grave. For our spiritual *'I'*, death always appears as a deliverer and friend: like the tranquil sleep of the infant, or like the sleep of blissful slumber and dreams."

"But as far as I can remember, the periodic incarnations of the *sutratman*\* are likened in the *Upanishad* to the earthly life alternating between sleep and wakefulness. Is that so?" I asked, wishing to resume Narayana's first question.

"Yes, that comparison is a very correct one."

"I do not doubt it. Only my understanding of it is hazy. After sleep, another day starts for man, but man in soul, as in body, is still the same that he was on the day before, while with every new incarnation not only do his outer envelope, sex, and very personality change, but obviously all his spiritual qualities as well. How can this comparison be true in light of the fact that people, upon arising from sleep, remember well not only that which they did yesterday but also that for many days, months, and even years back, whereas in their present life they do not preserve the slightest recollection of any past life? You see, a person that has awakened can, I dare say, forget what he saw in his dream, but just the same he knows that he slept and that during sleep he existed. About the past life we do not know even this much. How so?"

"There are such, perhaps, who do know," somewhat mysteriously uttered

\* In the *Vedanta*, *Buddhi*, when united with the spiritual qualities, perception, and understanding of those personalities in which it has been embodied, is called *sutratman*, which literally means "thread-soul," because the entire long series of human lives is strung on this thread like pearls on a string. In union with *sutratman* and hanging from it like a pearl on a thread, so to speak, *manas* must become *taijasa* (luminous) in order to attain and to become aware of itself in eternity. But frequently, as a result of sin and association with purely earthly mind, this very luminosity disappears.



Thakur without answering the direct question.

"I suspect... only *not we*, sinners. Therefore, how are we who have not attained *sama-sambuddha*\* to understand this comparison?"

"By studying it and by comprehending more accurately the characteristics, and the three kinds, of that which we call sleep."

"Well, that is rather difficult. Even our greatest physiologists have just become entangled in this question and, having themselves failed in their explanations, have confused us only the more," laughed the Colonel.

"Because they undertook not their own task, but the duty of the psychologists, of which you have none at all in Europe, at least not among the scientists. The Western psychiatrists are those same physiologists only under another name, and they function on the basis of principles still more materialistic. Just read Maudsley, and you will see that they treat illnesses of the psyche without believing in the existence of the soul itself."

"But we have again departed from the subject of our inquiries, which you, it appears, do not wish to explain to us, Thakur-sahib. You actually confirm and approve Babu's theory, and he maintains precisely the ground that we know nothing of either our past earthly life or our after-death life, and he wishes to prove that there is not and cannot be any kind of consciousness beyond the grave."

"Again I say that Babu is a *Charvaka* who repeats that which he was taught. I confirm and approve not the system

itself of the materialists, but only the correctness of the opinions of Babu himself in that which concerns his personal state beyond the grave."

"According to that, it appears that people like Babu must be an exception to the general rule."

"By no means. Sleep is an immutable general rule for man as well as for every living terrestrial creature. But there are different kinds of sleep and still more kinds of dreams."

"But he not only denies consciousness in the life following death and in its dreams, using the language of the *Vedantasara*, but also rejects immortality generally, as well as the immortality of his own spirit."

"In the first instance, he acts completely according to the canons of contemporary European science, which is founded on the testimony of our five senses. In this he is guilty only before those who do not share his opinions. In the second instance, he is no less right: without preliminary inner acknowledgment of and belief in the immortality of the soul, it will not become *buddhi-taijasa*,\* it will remain *manas*, and for *manas* alone there can be no immortality. *In order to live a conscious life in the world beyond the grave, it is necessary first to believe in that world during earthly life.* Our entire philosophy about the after-death consciousness, as well as the philosophy about the immortality of the soul, is built on these two aphorisms of the secret science. *Sutratman* always receives according to its merits. Following the dissolution of the body, it begins a period of complete wakefulness, or of

\* The knowledge of one's past incarnations. It is said that only yogis and adepts of the secret sciences attain this complete recovery of vision of their *entire* past by means of the greatest ascetic deeds.

\* That is, without complete assimilation *with the divine* soul, the *earthly* soul or *manas* will not live a conscious life in eternity. It becomes *buddhi-taijasa* (or *buddhi-manas*) when its aspirations during life draw it from the earthly toward the spiritual world. Then, nourished by the essence and permeated with the light of its own divine soul, *manas* disappears into *buddhi*, becomes *it*, preserving only the spiritual awareness of its terrestrial personality. Otherwise, like *manas*, that is, *human* opinion founded on the testimony of the physical senses only, our earthly or personal soul falls, as it were, into a sound sleep without dreams and without consciousness until the next incarnation.



chaotic sleep, or of sound dreamless sleep. If your physiologists have found the causality of dreams and visions in the unconscious storing of them during the time of wakefulness, then why cannot the same be acknowledged also in relation to dreams *after death*? I repeat that which the *Vedantasara* teaches: *death is sleep*. After death, before the spiritual eyes of the soul, a performance commences, which is based on a program that has been learned by us during life, and frequently on one that has been created by ourselves: a practical

enactment of either our *correct* beliefs or of the illusions that we ourselves have created. This is the posthumous fruit of the tree of life. It is understood that belief or unbelief in the fact of conscious immortality cannot alter the unconditioned reality of the fact itself once it exists. But both the belief and the unbelief in it of separate personalities cannot help but condition the action of this fact in its application to each one in particular. Now, I trust you understand?"

(To be continued)



## MENTAL-PORTRAIT DEPARTMENT

In order that the temperament of Lord Bacon may be more easily visualized by the eyes of the mind, a number of choice habits and tastes of the great man have been faithfully recorded.

During meditation, his lordship liked to have music playing softly in a nearby room.

According to Aubry, the High Chancellor liked to ride in an open coach while it rained, that he might enjoy "the benefit of irrigation." He had remarkable notions about the virtue of nitre, which was more abundant in the atmosphere on rainy days.

Those interested in the health recipes of the immortals will be happy to know that his lordship took three grains of nitre, sometimes with a little saffron, in warm broth every morning for thirty years. Once a week he took "water of Mithridate" diluted with strawberry water. Once a month he swallowed a grain and a half of castor in his broth at breakfast for two successive days. Every sixth or seventh day, he drank an effusion of rubarb in white wine and beer immediately before dinner.

Bacon always tried to visit some high and open place every morning the third hour after sunrise in order to take air. He also fumigated with the smoke of lignaloes, with dried bays and rosemary, and once a week he strengthened the fumigation with a little tobacco. Each morning he rubbed down with oil of almond mingled with salt and saffron.

His lordship favored well-beaten roasts for dinner, and liked flowers on the table. Half an hour before supper, he took a cup of hot and spiced wine or ale, and during supper, one glass of wine in which gold had been quenched. He always started a meal with warm food or drink, and on retiring he ate a piece of bread steeped in a mixture of wine, syrup of roses, and amber, and washed it down with a cup of ale to compose his spirits. In the spring he liked a glass of spiced pomegranate wine early in the morning, and was excessively fond of "the water-cresses."

Bacon's career becomes the more remarkable when we realize that in addition to these regular occupations he had time to be England's High Chancellor, a great philosopher, and the first scientist of the modern world.





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## Curiouser & Curiouser

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A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

### The Rabbit in the Moon

It is generally known to folks who generally know something that there is in the moon an old man carrying a bundle of sticks on his back. There is also on similar authority the statement that:

"The Man in the Moon  
Came down too soon,  
And asked his way to Norwich."

Somewhat less familiar is the sober report that the old gentleman who inhabits the moon is the very one whom Moses caught gathering firewood on the Sabbath. In Numbers XV:32,36, there is an account of the stoning of a man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day, but there is no reference to the moon.

In German folklore, the Sunday woodgatherer was trudging home when he met a handsome man on his way to church. The mysterious stranger asked the woodcutter if he did not know that it was Sunday on earth when men should rest from labor. "Sunday on earth or Monday in heaven, it is all one to me," laughed the peasant.

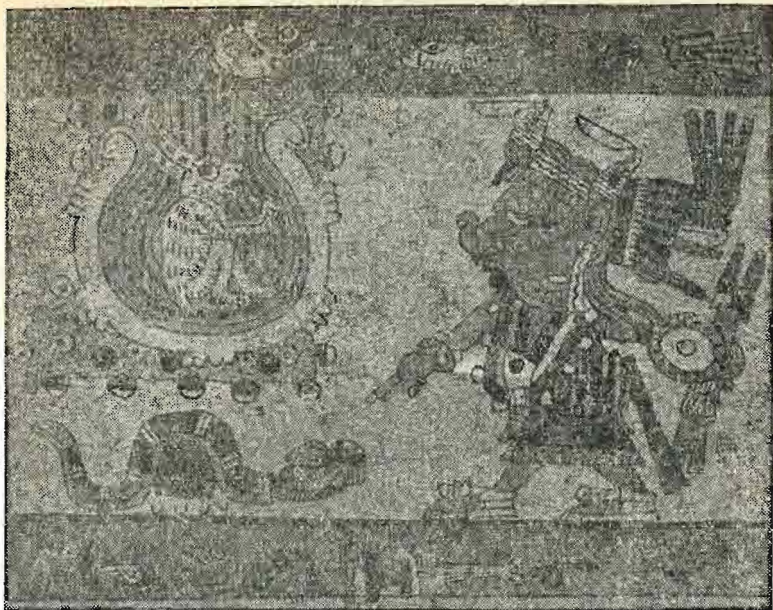
The stranger smiled, saying: "Yours shall be a perpetual Moon-day in

heaven," and vanished. The unhappy woodcutter was caught up with his burden, and has to live in the moon until Judgment Day.

References to this peculiar explanation for the markings on the surface of the moon are to be found in many localities, and some are of great antiquity. The story is mentioned by Chaucer, Dante, and in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Sometimes a dog is added. The Jack and Jill story is said to have come from the Nordic explanation of the waxing and waning of the moon.

Among the Buddhist legends is one describing an earlier incarnation of Gautama Buddha, in which he dwelt in the form of a hare. This hare had a lively friendship with a fox and an ape, and the three were inseparable. In order to test the virtue of the Buddha-to-be, the god Indra, taking the form of an old and feeble man, appeared to the three animals and asked for food. The fox and the ape soon returned with abundant supplies, but the hare, unequipped for foraging, could bring nothing. That he might not be lacking in hospitality, the hare then caused a fire to be kindled and cast himself into it so that he might





THE MOON RABBIT IN THE *CODEX BORGHESI*

become food for his guest. In reward for this act, Indra caused the hare to transmigrate to the moon, there to live in peace and happiness far from the troubles of the world.

Among the Hindu animal-fables is one about Toothy, the mighty elephant-king, and Longear, the wisest of the hares. On the occasion of a great drought, the elephant searching for water discovered a beautiful lake, around which countless hares had built their warrens. The herds of pachyderms trampled on the villages of the hares, killing many of them, injuring others, and depriving them of all hope of life. It was then that Longear offered to drive away the elephants. He then sat up very high and addressed himself directly to Toothy, the elephant-king. With a voice of authority, the hare ordered the elephants to get out and stay out. The astonished Toothy inquired who the presumptuous Longear might think himself to be. Longear replied that he was the hare who lived in the moon and was an ambassador of his

Excellency the Lunar Orb. This staggered the elephant for a moment, and he inquired the nature of the message. Longear explained that the elephants had injured numerous hares, and if they continued to do so the moon would stop cooling them at night and leave them all to be consumed by a perpetual sun.

The elephant was appropriately agitated and inquired as to how he could make a personal apology. Longear said that the moon at that moment was out in the lake listening to the complaints of the injured hares. Toothy asked the privilege of reverencing the moon, so Longear took him to the side of the lake and showed him the reflection in the water. The elephant-king, swinging his trunk in prayer, hit the water and caused the reflection to sway and quiver. The hare immediately explained that the moon was trembling with anger. This was too much for poor Toothy who, with drooping ears and subdued spirit, departed the region with his herd, so that the hares lived happily ever after.



It appears that the Hindu fables, especially the one of Buddha's incarnation as a hare, reached China and became an important symbol at an early date. All the animals of this group were believed, in Asia, to have originated from the vital essence of the moon. They were believed to conceive by gazing at the moon. The Chinese believed that the hare in the moon spent its time pounding the drugs of immortality at the foot of a great cassia tree.

Of unusual interest is the association of the rabbit and the moon in the symbolism of the early Amerindian tribes. The device occurs in several Aztec codices, including the *Codex Borgia* and the one in our collection which was published under the title, *Codex Hall*.<sup>\*</sup> The moon is usually shown in the Aztec manuscripts in the form of an *olla* (a bowl to hold rain water). The symbols for rock are at the sides and bottom of the *olla*, and the watery field of the moon is represented as blue, the semi-circular starry sky rests on top of the moon, and raindrops fall from the heavens. The hare is within the *olla*.

To summarize a subject of considerable curiosity: The legend, which ap-

parently originated in Europe and from there reached India, where in turn it was modified by local tradition and conveyed to China and Japan, suddenly reappeared in the Western Hemisphere. The so-called shadows on the moon's surface do not sufficiently resemble a rabbit to account for the spontaneous generation of the idea in several places. Also, the mythological material in Asia is not sufficiently ancient to have been brought across at some prehistoric period by wandering Mongol tribes. This is one example of world-wide mythologies which suggest a fertile field for research. Is it possible that the legend was brought to Asia by navigators between the 5th and 10th centuries of the Christian Era, when reports of such navigation are to be found in certain Asiatic writings and commentaries?

(\* This Aztec manuscript was published by the University of New Mexico Press in 1947, and the original is in the Library of the Philosophical Research Society. Facsimiles with brief commentary are available to those interested. Please inquire.)

## Curiosities in Art and Literature

The human mind has a curious tendency to dress abstract ideas in contemporary garments. We all know that the great painters made little, if any, effort to be accurate in matters of costume and the minor details of their pictures. Biblical characters appear in the most approved style of the Venetian Republic or the court of Louis le Grande. Occasionally the mistakes are amusing to moderns who are better-informed on matters of historical perspective. The *Cyclopaedia of Anecdotes*, published in Boston in 1859, has gathered some choice examples of artistic derelictions of truth.

In one of Albrecht Dürer's paintings of St. Peter denying the Saviour, a Ro-

man legionnaire is represented as smoking a pipe of tobacco. This up-to-date touch no doubt rejoiced the hearts of Dürer's contemporaries.

In a Dutch picture of Abraham the Patriarch offering up Isaac as a sacrifice unto the Lord, the pious old gentleman is, shown in the act of blowing off his son's head with a blunderbuss. No doubt this has something to do with early impressionism, realism, or the like.

Il Tintoretto, in a picture representing the Israelites gathering manna in the desert, armed the Hebrews with muzzle-loading guns. Probably no one cared, and guns, being at that time something



of a novelty, added to the composition a quality of "impact."

Brenghele, a Dutch painter, in a picture of the Eastern Magi who adored the new-born Christ child, took certain interesting liberties. He not only dressed the Wise Men of the East with boots and spurs, but the Indian king wears a white surplus and carries in his hand as a present to the Holy Child the model of a Dutch seventy-four! Probably the minds of the Hollanders could think of nothing more appropriate than a representation of one of their ships of war which carried a battery of seventy-four guns.

There is an old painting mentioned by a distinguished Philadelphia lawyer. It was by a French artist and represented the Lord's Supper. Both ends of the long table were decorated with modern tumblers holding cigar lighters.

The citizens of Philadelphia also rejoiced in the possession of a fine painting of the birth of Christ. The Virgin Mary is represented as sleeping on a French bedstead of the most fashionable mode, while Christ is lying nearby in a modern washing-tub. Strangely enough, the picture was not intended to be amusing and certainly not sacrilegious. It is a good example of modernization by which old events are properly brought up to date.

In a well-known painting of the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, of course, occupy the foreground, but there was the matter of filling in tastefully the farther distances. Conspicuous in the background stands a German student in hunting costume deliberately shooting ducks.

The Shakespearean plays vie with the painters in reorienting our concepts of the development of history and invention. In *A Comedy of Errors*, we learn that the citizens of the ancient city of Ephesus, which was destroyed in the 3rd century A. D., were addicted to such recent coinage as ducats, marks,

and guilders, and at a critical moment a clock struck!

King John and Macbeth seem to have had a ready knowledge of cannons that were not invented until much later.

In *Coriolanus*, references are made to Alexander, Cato, and Galen, all of whom flourished much later than the time of the play.

In *Julius Caesar*, Cassius speaks of a clock striking, which would make him one of the greatest seers of all time.

*King Lear* is specially blessed with inconsistencies. Gloucester, for example, rejoices that he has not been compelled to the use of spectacles.

In Beaumont and Fletcher, there is an outstanding example of modernization. In one of their plays, *Demetrius*, who lived long before the Christian Era, attracted considerable attention by discharging a pistol.

Probably no one cared and few noticed these delightful innovations, but it is fitting that such gems should be given their opportunity to shine.

To summarize a few other amusing peculiarities of high artistry, Verrio painted Christ healing the sick while the spectators were adorned with periwigs. There is a marriage of Christ with St. Catharine of Seina, while King David plays the harp. Dürer has Adam and Eve driven from Paradise by an angel wearing a flounced petticoat. Cigoli has Simeon at the circumcision of Christ wearing spectacles. In another work, the Virgin Mary is pouring herself a cup of coffee from a chased coffee-pot. Pousin did "Rebecca at the Well" with a background of Greek architecture. One artist has red lobsters in the sea listening to the preaching of St. Anthony of Padua. St. Jerome has been represented with a clock at his side, and there is a painting of "The Deluge" which includes modern ships. Further examination would undoubtedly reveal countless such evidences that great artists were not always so careful as Cecil B. de Mille in matters of research.



## The Philosophy of Oriental Flower Arrangement

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THE formal arrangement of flowers and plants before the altars of various divinities was practiced in China from time immemorial. The Chinese were inclined to preserve an extremely traditional style of such arrangements which usually were composed as right- and left-side altar ornaments. Artificial flowers or plants were frequently used, and, with the rise of Buddhism, the lotus was favored.

Other nations brought flowers and fruits to the shrines of their deities during festivals or as the private offerings of supplicants. There does not seem to have been, however, any preferred arrangement or design other than wreaths and garlands. Certain flowers were regarded as appropriate for special occasions and plants were frequently associated by legend or tradition with gods or heroes. We do not find, however, any special science of flower-worship or flower-ritualism among ancient Western cultures, nor do we observe any traditional artistry in the placing of floral offerings.

Peoples dwelling in tropical or semi-tropical regions where flowers were especially colorful and abundant were instinctively drawn to these naturally graceful adornments, and elaborate myths and legends occur to explain the origin and peculiarities of flowering

growths. Attitudes about floral decorations differed widely among primitive people. Sometimes floral tributes were essential parts of rites and ceremonies, but this practice was not consistent. Early sculpturing, paintings, etc., would indicate that floral motifs were almost entirely absent in several culture periods. In all, however, flowers have been accepted as symbols of veneration and adornment.

Throughout the East, the lotus was the most diversely used of all plant symbols. It occurs not only as an adornment for the divinities, but the parts of the plant have been separately employed in a variety of ways. The lotus throne is a familiar element of Eastern art. Sometimes, the blossom is inverted or double, and deities may be represented with each foot on a separate blossom. A headdress in the form of a lotus bud is not uncommon and a single petal of the flower is used as a nimbus. Mudras and postures include many patterned from the shape or growth of the lotus, and philosophically it represents consciousness rising from the darkness of matter and blossoming in the light of truth. The flower is used architecturally and a number of temples are developments of the lotus theme.

In Egypt, the water lily suggested many refinements in art and ornament-



tation. It was associated with the deities and was often placed upon tables of offerings before them. It occurred as a motif for the pediments of columns, and contributed to the decoration of furniture and various utensils. The lotus is the lily of the East, and Western nations have preserved part of its symbolism in the traditional Easter lily and the Biblical lily of the valley.

Long before the rise of our scientific era, flowers represented the principle of generation. The flower and the fruit were the fulfillment of the promise locked in the seed. Being primarily observationalists, our remote ancestors were profoundly impressed by the growth and unfoldment of living things from small and mysterious seeds. The earliest concepts of matter were seminal; that is, each atom or unit of substance was regarded as a seed from which might grow a creature, a creation, or a creator. God, Nature, and man grew from seeds, and all life was unfolding by an endless succession of fertility represented by the transmission of the power of life from the seed to the seed. The egg symbol of the Druids was identical in meaning with the seed symbols of those ancient peoples dwelling in the Valley of the Euphrates. Symbolically speaking, in the order of growth, the flower was the promise of the seed; therefore in itself, it represented immortality or, perhaps more correctly, the promise of immortality. It bore witness to the mystery of the new seed to come, by which the transmission of life was substantiated. The death and resurrection cycles of the old agrarian gods were the stories of the seed cast into the earth where it seemed to die and then to rise triumphantly from death in the form of the new, green shoot or sprig.

In his small life long ago, man had slight evidence of immortality except the promise in Nature about him. He developed the philosophy that still lingers that for him immortality likewise came from the seed. His descendants were the survival of himself, the unbroken

line of life from life. To break the line of descent was to destroy himself and terminate all that had gone before. It was therefore his duty to perpetuate his line that it might not only inherit but preserve the life stream. He endowed his descendants with his worldly goods because in so doing he bestowed them upon himself in the form of those who came after. The reasoning was simple, but it still dominates many of our legal, ethical, and social concepts.

As nations became more civilized, their interpretations of natural processes were correspondingly refined. From the literal, the mind passed to the symbolical. It began to bestow moral and ethical overtones by which simple objects came to mean more than the objects themselves directly represented. Flower symbolism enlarged to include the survival of those things which man cherished next unto himself. The human being must accomplish. In this world, he must do things that are important and these things must also survive, or his labors are in vain. Naturally, all the works of man are perishable, but they may be perpetuated long enough to become in turn seeds for future achievement. The passing on of the tradition, the faith, the work of the mind and hand, the convictions, the dreams, and the hopes—yes, even the fears and hates—became part of an inevitable duty or responsibility. Goods were buried with the dead, for how could a man find peace and joy in the afterworld if he were not surrounded by the things which had been dear to him in this life? In the same way, how could the man who lived on in his descendants find comfort or consolation unless his progeny had similar tastes, similar interests and, if possible, the identical objects and materials which had satisfied the ancestor.

To the average human mind, the future is the present plus the unknown. Instinctively, we assume that the present state of things will extend into the to-morrows. Thus we gain comfort and consolation in the belief that our works



and our institutions are at least relatively permanent. We prepare those who come after us for a world as we have known it, indoctrinating the minds of our descendants rather than equipping their faculties to cope with the new and the unexpected. Man thus becomes a dated creature in a timeless sphere. We build, not to protect progress, but to protect the *status in quo*. This is why most pioneers and innovators are persecuted by their contemporaries.

The growth of plants, shrubs, and trees has been used in many types of symbolism which require a diagram of progressive expansion. Thus we have genealogical trees to represent the descent of families, ethnological trees to diagram the development of races, and trees of arts and sciences to show in simple form the unfoldment of patterns from their seeds or roots. Old Bibles picture the descendants of Noah by means of a vast tree growing from the Ark, and lawyers are well-aware of the arbor-form depiction of the growth of legal codes. These tree symbols all teach one useful lesson, if we have the wit to see it. They reveal that progress is systematic, a growth along natural lines rather than spontaneous creations by miraculous means. The tree of life and the tree of good and evil mentioned in the Book of Genesis represent the unfoldment of spiritual energies from a root in God and the development of man's intellectual experience from the seed of his own mental potential. We can create a definition by saying that such diagrams represent the emergence of potencies from their potentials.

The *Cultus Arborum*, or the worship of trees, is recognized as one of the primitive religions of mankind. It was really a worship of growth, which is most evident in, and systematically revealed by, trees and plants. Early scientists believed that the systems of the human body, especially the nervous and arterial systems, extended throughout the structure, like trees or vines—the arterial, with its root in the heart, and the nervous, with its root in the brain.

The simple observation of plant life seems to have contributed immensely to the ordering of human thinking on all matters relating to unfoldment and progress. Certainly, the arbor-form diagram prevented the mind from drifting so quickly into fantasy and delusion.

In such climates as presented marked differences in the seasons, the apparent death of the tree in winter and its return to life at the time of the vernal equinox suggested the continuity of vitality in forms seemingly dead. It was not safe to trust the objective senses alone and declare the tree to have perished because its leaves had fallen and its branches appeared like gaunt bones. The seasonal death and resurrection of vegetation was a promise of the cyclic return of all life. We find this so firmly believed even in the early Christian communion that the greatest care was used in preserving the human body, so that the spirit could reanimate it on the blessed day of the Resurrection. Of course, the devout of that time believed that the Second Coming was imminent and that in all probability their loved ones would rise in the flesh within a few years. Bodies of Christian converts with the internal organs in place (contrary to the Egyptian method) have been found floating in a preserving fluid and so well-kept that the features showed no distortion. This entire concept was an extreme refinement of the agrarian cult and its belief in annual or periodic restoration.

Early in the human observation, the healing or medicinal value of plants was noted. Thus, flowering things gained a new dignity passing beyond nutritive considerations. Probably the plant was originally a fetish. Structures in the plant kingdom which resembled parts of the human body were supposed to be remedies for the ailments of those parts or members. The virtue of the plant was not regarded as residing primarily in the structure itself but in a vital or magical agent, a universal life principle variously captured and held by different shrubs and flowers. Most early



physicians had their own gardens which they tended with great care, and from which they drew their supplies of herbs and simples. The standing of the doctor in his community was measured by the completeness of his herb-bed.

In several ways, therefore, plants came to be involved in the religions, philosophies, and sciences of mankind. The fact that they passed through their entire cycle of growth in one place made their changes more immediately observable. The animal kingdom concealed most of its essential and biological processes by its instinctive timidity. The life cycle of the animal, at least until it was domesticated, was difficult to trace, but in the plant kingdom all the procedures were evident with the clarity of a diagram. Even after the rise of advanced intellectual institutions, the plant retained its importance as an aid to learning as well as a benefit to the flesh.

It was only after human society passed from a nomadic state to the condition of community existence that the artificial cultivation of plants for food, medicine, or adornment became significant. The villager gradually exhausted the natural abundance in the area immediately surrounding his habitation. He had to go farther and farther from his home to supply his immediate needs. To meet this requirement, he transplanted the most essential of his nutritional plants and restored the abundance of nearby fields. Thus, the farm and the garden became the simple answer to his simple needs. Time and experimentation enabled him to improve his methods until he depended entirely upon his own harvests for his survival. Only in times of great emergency did he forage beyond his fields.

The village also produced the beginnings of the pride of ownership. Primitive man adorned himself from a vanity completely innate. This instinct toward adornment finally included his home and his community. He painted the walls of his hut, he decorated his community buildings, and very soon he planted flowers and other shrubs accord-

ing to patterns originating in his own tastes. To him, adornment was more than a luxury; it was a social necessity. The flower garden might not supply food for his body, but it certainly nourished his soul. It also supplied him with materials to be used in his rites, customs, and observances.

The garden became a part of the aesthetic consciousness of civilization. Landscaping supplied an appropriate setting for public buildings. Beauty vied with utility, and Nature perfected that which in man was still deficient—a means of supplying charm or distinction. Many great philosophers and scientists have selected gardens as suitable avocational interests. They have found that the planning and laying out of gardens relaxes the mind, supplies natural and gentle exercise, and gives gracious expression to creating and organizing impulses. Here also was a splendid opportunity to study color and the combinations of shades and hues. The entire science of color, first expressed artistically and later developed industrially, is founded upon refinements in horticulture.

Old houses had a tendency to become dismal. Originally windows were few and small for reasons of protection, and the interiors were smoky and ill-ventilated. Long-usage without concepts of cleanliness rendered them not only unsightly, but also unsanitary and positively disagreeable. In medieval times, these decrepit structures leaned against each other and sagged in unsightly asymmetry. As gardens became more numerous, plants were introduced into homes to give color and even to perfume the air. There was some opposition, and a body of superstitions concerning such use of flowers came into existence. As we study the works of the old artists, however, we see that the practice increased in general favor. I have not noticed, however, any indication that plants or bouquets were subjected to stylization or formal arrangement.



In China, wealthy merchants and haughty mandarins developed a taste for miniature scenes reconstructed within doors. Often an alcove was set aside to give the illusion of a large window looking out into wild and rugged country. Miniature plants were cultivated to increase the illusion of naturalness and perspective. There were rocky mountains, miniature waterfalls, little valleys, and tiny forests. Here and there buildings prepared to scale were introduced until the impression was pleasant and naturalistic. Such elaborate planning for interior decoration may have occurred occasionally to the Western mind, but was never so generally employed as in the East.

The Oriental mind has always been strangely addicted to naturalness. It has attempted to attain an artistry in which the human agency was not revealed. The dominant concept was obedience to the natural processes of life. The Easterner does not wish to be recognized as an originator or an innovator. He is only satisfied when his own handiwork passes completely unnoticed. He realizes that Nature does not produce only flowers with straight stems. He simply cannot understand why an Occidental will select a dozen slender roses, all as nearly alike as possible, add a spray of maidenhair fern, wire the stems to the flowers if necessary, wrap the lower third of the bouquet in green waxed paper, tie it with a silk ribbon, and present it with an appropriate flourish. He is still more disturbed when the recipient removes the wrapping and dumps the flowers into an off-color receptacle and then stands the ensemble in some cluttered room, where it resembles more than anything else the plumes on Lady Astor's horse.

Our Asiatic brother also winces when we dip carnations in turquoise dye or arrange tiny blossoms in horseshoes, stars, and massive circles resembling life preservers. He may respect the sentiment, but certainly not the artistry. To him, such atrocities are nothing but the

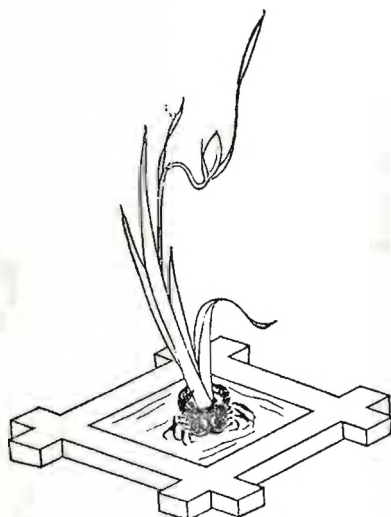
human ego imposing itself upon the works of God. Of course, if the Oriental goes into the florist business in America, he must conform with the prevailing taste, or lack of it, but he is selling merchandise which he would never wish to buy. I knew a flower-arrangement artist who traveled up and down the city visiting a dozen florists before he could find a few, to his mind, beautiful crooked flowers.

The Japanese houseboy, with floral art in his soul, is a strangely inflexible human being, who can prove most disconcerting to American businessmen in a hurry. You may be driving along quietly when Watanabe cries out in anguish that the car must be stopped immediately. He has sighted a perfectly beautiful piece of rotted wood by the side of the road. A few moments later, he sees a stone, for lack of which his soul will perish. A little later, a fragment of moss catches his eye, and before the trip is finished the back of the car is loaded with odds and ends from Nature's workshop, presided over by an entranced Asiatic, whose expression resembles that of an ecstatic saint.

Lunch may be late, dinner may never arrive, and the pattern of living be completely disorganized. Somewhere in an obscure spot comparatively safe from discovery, Watanabe is building a universe according to his heart's desire. From superficially unpromising materials, a work of art is swiftly, surely, and deftly coming into being. When it is finished, even the most disgruntled of gentlemen must acknowledge that the result is a medicine for burdened hearts and minds. It is a flower arrangement, only, due to circumstances of the day, there are no flowers. The rocks have become great cliffs; the moss is ancient lichen clinging to their ageless surface. The stump of a lightning-struck tree, weathered by the storm of centuries, is entwined with tiny creepers, and all this miracle stands in a shallow dish of crackleware, some fifteen inches in diameter. To Watanabe, this is satisfaction of soul. It breathes of struggle,



of rocky islands, some landmark of his own homeland. This is life as it is, with growing things forever victorious. It is light and darkness, life and death, time and eternity, God and Nature. We may not understand all that is in the heart of the artist, but we can feel a little of the importance of the philosophy and mysticism of his elusive maturity of consciousness.



It should not be assumed, however, that Oriental floral art is as simple or informal as may first appear. The Eastern artist is subject to rigid rules of craftsmanship, and these canons are founded deep in tradition. Everything is done for a reason and according to a plan. The finished product is a particular suspended from, and within, a general. Each part of the design is meaningful, and the meanings are in no way restricted to the obvious requirements of superficial design. It is always art perfecting Nature, revealing Nature, teaching the ways of life, and ministering to the internal requirements of the human soul. For the fullest possible effect, both the artist and the beholder must share a common understanding. The artist must reveal, and the beholder must perceive.

The adventure-perception is the privilege of the spectator. He measures the capacity of the artist by the breadth and depth of his own nature, by the culture of which he is a product, by the school to which he belongs, and by the skill with which he unites, arranges, and distributes apparently unrelated elements. The materials are always a challenge, and the artist must discover their common denominator. He must, so to say, find Nature and the law. Having perceived to his own satisfaction the elements of the design, he must then with utter craftsmanship accomplish that which he experiences. The slightest inaccuracy, the slightest inconsistency, the smallest deviation from the law of the whole design brands him an amateur—one unworthy to sit with the masters of his school.

Surprisingly enough, the flower artist seldom has recourse to preliminary sketches or trial arrangements. Like the Eastern painter, he perfects the concept within himself. Frequently he spends considerable time in visualization and meditation. Complete familiarity usually permits him to work swiftly and deftly, but if unusual elements are involved in the design these are accepted first as an experience within the mind and their eccentric factors are overcome before the actual arrangement is undertaken. Due to the subtleness of the results, these arrangements are almost impossible to copy. The Westerner may achieve a reasonable similarity which satisfies his untrained instinct in these matters, but it is most unlikely that his product will meet the approval of an Asiatic connoisseur. The floral design is a symbol of a way of life, deep and profound convictions about universal truths. Without the internal experience and the discipline of long patience and great thoughtfulness, the patterns cannot be evolved from internal inspiration.

Perhaps floral arrangement teaches us a significant lesson applicable to all of the fine arts, including even music, poetry, and the dance. Supreme artistry originates within the individual. It is



not bestowed merely by the tedious cultivation of technique. Art without technique may be frustrated, but technique without art is an abomination unto the spirit. Great artists often establish schools or, as they are sometimes called, workshops, where they teach aspiring pupils. We can wonder, however, who bestowed the power of mastery upon the Masters. Who taught Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo? They probably received some training, but their genius came from hidden depths within themselves. Skill is won by effort, but genius is bestowed by the Divine.

Eastern Masters seldom signed their work or left any telltale peculiarity by which their masterpieces could be immediately identified. Religious art was the work of monks, who, having renounced all worldliness, placed neither seal nor character upon their productions. In recent years, of course, it has been fashionable for painters and sculptors to identify themselves through their works. This practice is due, in part at least, to the pressure of economic considerations, which were comparatively absent in earlier times. Now a reputation means wealth, and wealth means not only survival, but also freedom to do those things which otherwise would be seriously curtailed. Authenticity, or spiritual genuineness, has survived best and longest where the type of artistry did not lend itself to commercialization. The flower arrangement meets this requirement, and therefore is distinguished by the survival of integrity of design.

The Asiatic artist is in many ways a remarkable character. For one thing, he is completely single-tracked at any given moment. He does not expect those who see his work to judge it in terms of environment or any external factor. Usually, he prefers to hang a white cloth behind his arrangement when it is exhibited. A small screen will do if it is entirely plain, but the cloth is simpler and it is in no way important whether this white background is wrinkled or hung slightly askew. If

it sags or bags, we are not there to pass judgment upon the background.

Flower arrangement has played a part in the rituals and symbolism of Chinese secret political societies and those of other Eastern nations. The elements of the floral designs can be used to spell out words or to form the complicated ideographs of the Chinese language. What appears to be merely a decorative bouquet in a store window may announce a meeting of the Tong or warn the members of the presence of spies or interlopers. Threats and warnings are thus spread throughout a community by flower codes or ciphers meaningless to the uninitiated. Special information may in the same way be incorporated into the ornamentation of art goods, such as paintings, ceramics, lacquers, and jewelry.

The philosophies of Eastern Asia developed the symbolism of a basic triad composed of heaven, earth, and man. An understanding of this triadic concept unlocks many curious symbolic compositions. In painting, the heaven-element must predominate. This predominance of the superior part is indicated by the placing of the design itself upon the silk and the method of mounting. The vertical panel is the most common shape of Oriental picture. The pictorial part is almost always in the lower portion of the panel, and when the scroll is bordered with silk or brocade, the upper border is the widest. This is the exact reverse of the Western way of matting or framing a picture. The Occidental always places his widest margin at the bottom.

The heaven-border never receives special ornamentation, but is left of the native material, whatever that may be. In this way, the artist acknowledges the dominion of the superior world in all the works of Nature and man. The organization of the parts of the picture thus "reveals the law." There is no obvious preaching or exaggerated revelation of the universal mystery. In a quiet way, however, the dignity of the Divine is emphasized. Occidentals find



this arrangement confusing at first and it presents some difficulties when hanging Eastern pictures in Western homes. The pictorial center of interest may be obscured by the piano, the sofa, or a high-back chair. After a time, the Oriental way ceases to appear eccentric and conveys a pleasing and comforting impression which grows with contact and understanding.

The second element is earth, and this is represented by the narrower and subordinated lower margin. In Eastern symbolism, earth is not merely a physical element; it is the quality of earthliness. Matter becomes the symbol of materiality—a state of consciousness, not a substance. The earth-symbol expands to become Nature, which reveals, through an infinite variety of flora and fauna, the procreateness of the maternal principle. Man is the child of heaven and earth, or God and Nature, and his activities are bounded by these extremes. He exists between the above and the below, or as Goethe says "...twixt heaven and earth, dominion wielding."

In a typical scene by an Asiatic painter, we see as a background great mountains, their lofty summits fading into the colorless silk of the background. This upward sweep of mass mingling with the eternal quality of space conveys the impression of the "heaven-ever-existing." The mind of the beholder, responding by instinct to the testimony of the eyes, receives and accepts the impression of eternity and of vast immeasurable distances. Inevitably, the heaven-mood is generated in the consciousness. This mood itself is not only appreciation, but also worship. The heaven-perceiving becomes the heaven-experiencing and the heaven-accepting. The purpose is not to preach, but to state. The fact is announced to the satisfaction of both the artist and the connoisseur.

Next comes the earth-acknowledging. In the foreground, the landscape becomes more familiar. There may be a waterfall, rocks, some gnarled and twisted trees, and at least one symbol of death or decay. In the earth-acknowledging

part, the motifs extend on horizontal planes and, like the horizontal broken line which is the Chinese symbol of earth, the planes are always interrupted in some way. In the upper part of the earth-section of the design, some elements will reach toward the vertical, and, like a clump of bamboos or the branches of a weatherbeaten fir, will seem to grope toward the heaven-distances above. Always life and death will be contrasted, and death presented as separation from the heaven-including.

Somewhere in the lower middle-distances between the space and the stone, the triad will be completed by the presence of man. There will be an old scholar seated in front of his little hut, or a boy leading an ox, or, again, a procession of horsemen in bright trappings. The more carefully we examine the picture, the more clearly we can experience its symbolical integrity. Frequently, the man-symbols are accompanied by animals or birds or, perchance, fish or insects. From this circumstance, we learn that man is a compound of the animal and the human. The soul, or internal self, is the truly human part, and the body is the animal companion. Of course, many Eastern pictures are devoted to subjects other than the traditional landscape, but always, if we seek the triad, we will find it.

One charming silk panel contained in its lower third an egg, a chick, and a broken shell. Here is the heaven-earth-man-witnessing. The egg is heaven; the broken shell is earth; and the chick, which has come forth is the man-substantiation. In another composition, a sage with a bundle on his back crosses a bridge. You will ask: What is in the bundle? This question is the heaven-revealing, for all men ask the nature and substance of the Divine which is a mystery, like the philosopher's sack. And, like the contents of the sage's bundle, there will be no answer. The bridge is the earth-justifying, for all mortals must cross the bridge of matter to reach the Divine. The sage himself is the man-symbol, for he carries the





### RIKKA ARRANGEMENT FEATURING AUTUMNAL PLANTS

Advanced students of the Ika-no-bo School are permitted to prepare folios of designs and to make copies of certain private texts used by their Masters. This arrangement, based upon a circle, is a good example of the more advanced and technical designs.





—From *The Flowers of Japan, etc.*, by Josiah Conder

JAPANESE INTERIOR, WITH ARRANGEMENT  
OF SUMMER FLOWERS

A Japanese lady, seated beside the alcove which is to receive the floral design, is selecting and preparing a vertical pattern for a vase.





—From *The Flowers of Japan, etc.*, by Josiah Conder

JAPANESE INTERIOR, WITH ARRANGEMENT OF  
WINTER FLOWERS

Here the floral design is placed in the alcove and combined with a vertical-scroll painting. The painting itself is appropriate to the season, and belongs to a series which is changed quarterly.





RIKKA ARRANGEMENT FROM MANUSCRIPT TEXTBOOK  
FOR GRADUATES OF THE IKA-NO-BO SCHOOL

From a collection titled *ONE HUNDRED SECRETS OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS*, dated 1724. The work bears the sign and seal of one of the Masters of the school.



burden of the unknown and stands upon the bridge. Thus the symbolism continues through all the departments of the art concept.

Floral painting reached a high degree of stylization in the first half of the Ming period. One delicate painting comes to mind: a cluster of pink chrysanthemums arranged with several broad flat leaves of morning-glories; a caterpillar is busy at work eating the leaves, which have already been scalloped to supply the bright-colored worm with his lunch. The meaning should now be clear. The flowers are the heaven-symbols; the morning-glory leaves are the earth; and the caterpillar is man. Later, the worm will become a glorious butterfly, a change suitable to express the spiritual regeneration of humanity. Nor should we have more difficulty in interpreting a magnificent waterfall, dropping into a quiet, deep pool among rocks, and golden carp darting about in the pool. The waterfall, which over-shadows the whole design and falls from mysterious heights, is heaven-bestowing; the pool, earth-receiving; and the fish, man, or life-revealing.

In the flower arrangements, the elements are placed so as to reveal three, five, or seven distinct focal areas. An even number is seldom used, as the Japanese consider only the odd numbers to be dynamic or symbolical of life processes. The triad is always present, but may be extended according to exact rules. The perfect full-blown flower is always heaven, and will be placed so as to dominate the arrangement. The leaf is earth, and the bud is man. In non-floral arrangements where plants, shrubs, and even vegetables are employed, these are selected because of traditional associations, and emphasis is upon shape or the dominance of lines—vertical, oblique, and horizontal. Then the oblique line represents man. In such patterns, an odd-shaped piece of dead wood or a curiously formed stone signifies earth. The key may be life-death-man. Then man will appear in the midst of the design by some device showing life con-

quering death, growing up about it, or rising above it.

It might seem that this triad would restrict floral arrangements and result in an oppressive monotony of design. Here, art and creative imagination reveal the master. As Nature itself tells one story eternally, but with limitless variety, so art, witness-bearing, achieves in a vase or a flat bowl a statement of the reality without ever actually repeating a single design. We can become fascinated by the diversity of means for accomplishing a single end, but should we be really amazed? Are not all creatures attaining one purpose, and is not the goal, sought in so many ways, actually the heaven-discovery through the unfolding of consciousness?

When we compare Eastern and Western art, especially floral designs, one peculiarity almost immediately attracts our attention. The great Western masters instinctively triangulated their themes, and then built up their groupings and masses by combining smaller triangular patterns. Perhaps we can go so far as to use the Eastern canons when criticising the merits of our own artists. Great art includes prominent use of instinctual and intuitive faculties. There is a sense of rightness, even if the intellectual grasp of the universal design is lacking. Among even the most primitive peoples, there is a native sense of values which intrigues and even bewilders the more sophisticated technicians.

The flower symbolism, as we find it in Buddhist monuments, presents an incredible diversity of subtle applications. When Gautama Buddha revealed the world dharma in his celebrated sermon at the Vulture's Peak, he came to that part which could no longer be communicated by words. He then picked up a lotus blossom which had been brought to him by one of his disciples, and, holding it in his lap in the cupped palms of his hands, simply gazed upon it without speaking. After some time, one of the disciples said quietly: "Master, I have received the law." In this way



began the descent of Zen, the sect that teaches without words.

The open flower of the lotus is thus the Eastern symbol of illumination, but any flower native to a region can serve the same symbolic purpose. Among Christian mystics, the rose has become the equivalent of the lily of India and China. In both systems, the petals conceal a golden heart, or center, and, as the flower matures, this center becomes visible. In Luther's crest, a heart is placed within the rose, and inside the heart, a cross. Among Orientalists, the sacred monosyllable *OM* is sometimes shown in the center of a thousand-petaled lotus. The Eastern mantram "*OM MANI PADME HUM*" means "the jewel in the heart of the lotus." Most meditation mandalas are lotus-formed or contain designs including the separate petals of this flower. Western mystical disciplines have long used the rose for strengthening the internal power of visualization. But concentration upon the symbol without the internal experience of the true meaning is ineffective. It is the experience of unfoldment and not the mechanical mental action that accomplishes the desired end.

Nature itself, a great garden in which countless living creatures fulfill their destinies of growth, is the perfect mandala. The impact of Nature upon the human being is twofold. To the ignorant, the world is a menacing force—a vast area of hazards filled with creatures threatening the human survival. It is also a limitation upon the fulfillment of ambition and desire. It circumscribes all its creations with barriers of law and order, which the untutored mind resents with all the force of its petty prejudices and conceits. To the wise, Nature is a magic-picture garden filled with wonders and stimulating into activity the noblest potentials of man's character. Natural ways are not always obviously satisfactory, but they are manifestations of a wisdom greater than our own. It is far wiser to understand Nature than it is to oppose her ways. She punishes and rewards according to merit

alone, and her justice is most evident to those in themselves just.

The universal phenomenon of growth, the unfoldment of all things from their own potentials, indicates the way of present progress and ultimate union with the source of life. The natural mystery can be observed and estimated by the senses and faculties, but it must be experienced or known inwardly through the powers of the soul. By the same rule, those who would reveal their understanding of life's ways cannot teach by intellectual means alone. They must learn to express through the mind and its instruments values which have originated and been perfected in the soul. Words from the heart are usually wise and gentle, but words spoken from the mind and the lips are often prejudiced.

The Oriental flower artist takes advantage of the richness of Nature in the selection of his materials. He does not choose the most perfect or the rarest, but his inclinations tend to the appreciation of the simple and the commonplace. The weed is as significant as the most carefully cultivated blossom, and always he prefers wild growths to such as have been too greatly conditioned by human intervention. The artist wishes to capture a mood taken directly from the field, forest, or the mountainside. If he has received religious training, he is likely to favor the rustic and the informal. He does not wish to overwhelm the spectator with mass or elaborateness, and least of all does he wish the financial equation to enter the mood. He will be crushed if someone says: "My, what an expensive dish," or "Those flowers cost a lot of money." To the mind of the artist, this would be equivalent to saying: "Gracious, but God is expensive!"

In the selection of an appropriate container, the low, flat dish is especially suitable for the amateur. We may not go so far as one Korean gentleman who selected a frying pan because it offered "good design," but certainly there is no advantage in buying the most expensive type of container. Color is also very im-



portant. A neutral tone of beige or warm gray or a very soft green, or some shade that suggests the colors of earth or the small life that clings closely to the ground, will be the best. Bright shades will restrict the selection of floral colors, or may make the container more prominent than the arrangement. The flowers or plants are usually held in place by small devices called *frogs*. These may be of clay, pierced to hold the stems of the plants, or, even better, disks of lead in which pins are placed so that the frog looks like a coarse metal brush. Three such frogs will be sufficient. A small pair of garden scissors and a little water pump resembling a spray gun will complete the equipment. If the artist wishes to be slightly more extravagant, he may also have a container for a vertical design and a small wooden-table base on which to stand the finished design. As time goes on, numerous odd and interesting containers will suggest themselves, but they should be acquired as needed and appreciated. To purchase several in the beginning is to secure at some expense containers which will not satisfy the requirements of an enlarging consciousness.

If you have a garden of your own or your neighbors are friendly, you may gather materials close to home. A city-dweller must depend upon the local florists or occasional trips to the country. The latter source is by far the better and can often be combined with weekend jaunts or visits to suburban friends. Look first for odd and distinctive pebbles, broken twigs, fragments of rotted bark, and bits of moss or lichen. When selecting an item, try to visualize its place in the triad of heaven-earth-man. This triad is always relative, and the same piece can play different roles in different arrangements. One great flower artist said that he only selected articles which he felt drawn to by a kind of psychic sympathy. If he responded to the message of the shape, texture, and proportions of the item, then it was his and was suitable to tell the story in his heart.

After such basic furnishings as the pieces of rock and wood have been accumulated in sufficient number and variety to serve many purposes, the selection of the more perishable living forms will naturally follow. The great artist is always sensitive to the struggle of life—growth achieved over adversity. This is Nature's success story, a constant inspiration to those whose burdens are heavy.



The great flower arranger may go into ecstasy over the little flower that has survived in the crack of a pavement, or the tiny white blossom that found its handful of earth in the steep side of a dead stump. Grasses, weeds, vines, and creepers are just as dramatic as orchids and gradenias, and tell a much deeper and more honest story. Among the materials thus gathered are some which have already been part of a design which suggests the treatment of a complete arrangement. Sketches may help to preserve these patterns and to suggest modifications.

Never try to hurry a flower arrangement. Do not decide at the last moment to have a masterpiece ready when the Joneses come to tea. Haste destroys the



mood, and ends usually in the desperate dumping of everything available into any receptacle available. We must be patient when we work with life and must especially remember that the finished design tells the story of ourselves, our mood at the moment, and the clarity or confusion of our aesthetic impulses. It helps to know a little botany and much psychology. Flowers not naturally compatible by locality or season should not be combined. This could not happen in the old days, but now the florist can offer an assortment which breaks the normal rhythm of the seasons. Nature is always consistent, and art perfects Nature only by obeying her rules. It is also desirable that the flower arrangement should be composed in a quiet and private place where there is little likelihood of interruption and no probability of suggestions by the well-meaning uninformed.

The Eastern artist usually sits quietly in front of his empty bowl and meditates for a few minutes, or recites within his own heart a little prayer of thanksgiving and peace. Then, following the quiet urge within, he selects the dominant keynote which is heaven. This is the first and perfect statement of the law. Once it is chosen, all else must be subservient and complementary. Nothing must disturb the blessing of heaven as it stands forth as the symbol of a universal truth. Whatever branch, shrub, or flower is to represent heaven must convey the nobility of the overself. It is the strong spirit in man, his hope, his dream, his aspiration. If heaven is to be a particularly beautiful branch of fir, after it has been placed, it may then be necessary to trim or shape the branch to convey the unity of its symbolism. When trimming, always cut at a natural joint or in some place covered by other twigs or leaves. Never leave bare cuts showing; Nature does not. If it is desired to reshape a branch, this can be done with fine black wire hidden in the foliage. Do not expect symmetry in the common sense of the term to be beautiful. The arrangement should not look

like a whiskbroom standing in a dish of water. Each branch must be triangulated, and all the motions should fulfill the laws of dynamic symmetry. Design should not point in several directions, at least not obviously. The eye must travel toward heaven, earth, or man.

Beginners will find it wise to limit themselves to the three major elements, and should not proceed further than a triangulation of the parts of each of these. Thus, there will be three triangles, each consisting of a heaven-part, an earth-part, and a man-part. There may be small twigs, buds, leaves, etc., in addition along the stems and branches as in Nature, but these lesser parts should not attract the attention. Having established heaven, the next problem is to reveal the earth. Here the rocks or pieces of bark, rotted wood, mosses, and such come into their own. Again, triangulate and never use too much. Simplicity is always the proof of mental and emotional maturity. Only the most skilled expert can pull together extremely complicated designs. It is often good to break the edge of the container with some down-sweeping line, like a creeper, to prevent the mind being limited by the concept of the dish.

By the time that heaven and earth have been satisfactorily arranged, the place of man reveals itself. Occidentals often use miniature figures to give life and the illusion of landscape. Such a practice is rare in the East; it is too obvious. Where it is done in shop windows, etc., it merely caters to what the Easterner feels to be the uncultivated faculties of his Western customer. There is no set rule, however, for those who are merely attempting a pleasant arrangement. If they wish a porcelain figure of Kuan Yin standing in water up to her knees, or an oversized glass fish swimming on a piece of mirror, these are disasters which only time can cure.

The principle behind the man-symbol is emphasis upon form or a compound of the heaven-earth, spirit-matter



interaction. All forms are combinations of energy and substance and should be symbolized in a way that suggests this middle ground of qualities. As the bud signifies a condition superior to the leaf but inferior to the blossom, it conveys the impression of an intermediate state. The impression may also be created by size or position of the related factors or by any cryptic arrangement of traditional devices which can be so interpreted. Man himself or any artificial work of man by which the term *art* is brought to the mind is suitable. The natural stone or pebble symbolizes earth, but if this stone is cut or carved it then signifies man. The same emphasis can be brought by comparisons or the focusing of attention on differences. For example, if heaven is represented by vertical growth, such as bamboo, and earth, by creepers or slender grasses arching over and down in the posture of earth-witnessing, then a bright flower will by contrast reveal the man-principle.

If the triadic arrangements are correctly made, the complete design stands for good fortune, prosperity, happiness, peace, or security. By virtue of correctness, it becomes good-bestowing. Those who see it receive an impression of well-being. The critic's judgment is satisfied; the connoisseur's artistic discrimination is pleased; and the layman's instinctive sense of fitness is not offended. The ministry of the design is the atmosphere which it causes in the mental and emotional planes of human consciousness. That which is sufficient or proper or consistent is fortunate. Man dwelling in the presence of artistic integrity is strengthened subconsciously, and his daily affairs reflect a larger and more optimistic disposition. If, however, the design is improperly balanced, it depresses consciousness, which responds negatively to the testimonies of the faculties.

After the design itself is completed, it becomes a kind of microcosm and, because it is a work of art compounded by a human being, the whole arrange-

ment is a man-symbol. This requires that it be placed appropriately in its space-frame—the room in which it is ultimately to be exhibited. If placed too high, it attacks heaven, and conveys the impression of audacity. If placed too low, it becomes servile, radiating self-consciousness and a false humility. It loses dignity if it is crowded and becomes completely negative against a background of color- or form-confusion.

The Oriental home usually has a recess or alcove designed to receive flower arrangements or small groups of the family art treasures. If such is impossible or impractical to the Westerner, then an area of wall space must be cleared to represent space-heaven. If the wall paper does not convey the impression of heavenliness, a small screen without decoration may be placed behind the floral composition. Or a square of rich but simple material without prominent design can be used as a background. The tinted-plaster wall of the modern home is usually an excellent setting.

Once the location is decided, there must be the heaven-earth-man justification. Beside and slightly above the arrangement, a vertical painting of simple composition, possibly only a column of characters (letters), indicates heaven. It should extend well above the arrangement and must never be in the center of the open space or cut into the principal part of the floral design. The upper-left side, as the spectator faces, is the most appropriate. Below and to the right, the earth-witness can be a round or oval incense burner or a fine piece of bronze or ivory. It should not be the same shape as the flower vessel. If the floral container be a vase, then the earth-form should be squat and bulging. Sometimes the earth-symbol is tied to the floral design by the direction of some branch or creeper in the flower arrangement itself. A spray of ivy extending toward but not reaching the earth-symbol causes the eye to follow and accept the symbol as terminal or completing a pattern.



If the floral arrangement is placed on a taboret or teakwood frame below the middle of the space to be occupied, the *kakemono*, or painting, clear of the flower design at upper left, and the incense burner below and in front approximately in line with the right edge of the flower container, the eye will follow a diagonal from upper left to center or slightly right of center and then tilt slightly down and forward to the incense burner, thus forming two sides of an oblique triangle. Under no conditions must the pieces be so arranged that the three form a straight line in any direction. Dynamics result from the lines of the flower arrangement itself opposing symmetrically the angle of the setting or space-contained design.

After working with the flower arrangement against the blank wall allotted to it, it will be discovered that all three parts—the painting, the floral pattern, and the earth-symbol—must be off-center. Things die when they are in the middle, because it is a static point. In the study of great art, you will find that the point of interest is never in the center. In the Occidental system, the focal point is usually above

center; in the Oriental, it is below center. Little by little the unfolding of pattern-consciousness will assist the thoughtful person to correct numerous defects in the arrangements of the furniture and fixtures of his home.

The tendency will be to simplify and integrate furnishings and decorations. The dignity of blank spaces will become more apparent as we approach the heaven-consciousness within ourselves. Thus, flower arrangement is discipline by which we experience a gradual refinement of values. As we express these values and require them from our environment, we organize and integrate the confusion resulting from thoughtlessness. As we improve in one facet of our complex personalities, we create symbols of growth which we can apply in all the departments of our lives. The thoughtful flower arranger is growing within himself, and is transmuting in a gentle and kindly way his aesthetic capacities into artistic abilities. Becoming sensitive to the universal mystery about him, he strengthens his powers to appreciate, understand, and serve the universal laws which flow into manifestation from within himself.



## HEAVENLY-HELP DEPARTMENT

A lady whose husband followed the sea sent a note to the clergyman, which read: "A husband going to sea, his wife desires the prayers of the congregation." At least that is what the reverend gentleman announced from the pulpit. Actually, he had done a little editing, for the illiterate woman had actually written: "A husband going to see his wife, desires the prayers of the congregation."

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A Parisian printer wrote a tragedy called *Joshua*. He then set the type himself and gave a copy of the beautiful book to the celebrated Bodoni, a fellow printer at Parma. "What do you think of my tragedy?" asked the author. "Full of beauty!" exclaimed Bodoni; "Your characters are perfect—exquisite—especially the capitals."





## In Reply

### A Department of Questions and Answers

*QUESTION: A number of persons studying mystical and metaphysical subjects report that they have experienced psychic phenomena and spirit manifestations of one kind or another. What procedure would you advise when such a circumstance arises without being intentionally cultivated?*

ANSWER: Possibly the first step toward solution under such conditions is to determine whether the phenomenon is psychical or psychological. Until recent years no effort has been made to differentiate between outside entities and submerged phases of the human personality. Thus we have two distinct causes producing effects which appear, at least superficially, to be identical. Only by careful analysis of the effects themselves can the causes be ascertained with reasonable certainty.

Several classes and types of human beings are drawn to religious study and membership in religious organizations. Generally speaking, these potential members or followers come from the more introverted levels of mental and emotional activity. This is not intended to imply any defect of mind, as most of the world's original and creative thinkers have been more or less introverted.

It does, however, imply a personality pattern which under certain stress or strain is subject to a remarkable intensification of the imaginative faculty and a proclivity to daydreaming. An intense internal life and a limitation of external interests distinguish those most likely to be interested in abstract religious or mystical research and speculation.

Humans are also divided into defensives and escapist. The defense mechanism is a subconscious instinct to protect the ego from what the poet calls the arrows of outrageous fortune. The individual builds attitudes and convictions as buffers against realities. The tendency may be so subtle that only a very honest and thoughtful survey of characteristics and reactions can reveal the mechanism. The escapist lives in a world of substitutions. He constantly pacifies his dissatisfactions by imposing upon them a sequence of secret hopes,



dreams, and visions of personality- and appetite-fulfillment in some remote and more congenial time or place. Here, again, the thoughtful individual must examine himself to determine the extent and power of these equations in his own nature. We are most likely to be deceived by conditions around us if first we have in some way deceived ourselves.

Psychological phenomena are almost always associated with long-established personality pressures. To the degree that we lose the ability to relax, we open ourselves to the conflicts which tension inevitably causes. There is a delicate consideration involved in all processes of self-analysis. The human being, especially one under pressure, is apt to be an extremist, even when attempting to analyze his own characteristics. The flood of literature dealing with popular psychology and psychiatry for the layman has contributed to the very dilemma which it was intended to relieve. Critical self-analysis, in terms of an array of frightening descriptions, warnings, symptoms, etc., may cause many new pressures, fears, worries, and doubts. Even the professional psychologist is not always comforting, and unless he is better than the average he can confound the existing confusion. But even so, a simple and direct survey of our own policies can be both helpful and revealing.

It is hard to imagine that a worrier is not aware of his own negative habit. He may feel that he has every reason and right to his fears, but he cannot deny that his addiction to the practice of apprehension has done him more harm than good. Some doleful creature will come to me and, with a wan smile, explain that he has tried, oh, so hard, to see the good in everything, and then will settle down to a detailed explanation as to why he has suffered more unjustified misery than all the rest of humankind put together. Such folks are always in trouble, and they immediately spoil any opportunity that comes to them or any situation in which they are placed. There seems no good rea-

son why the individual cannot become aware of his own dominant tendencies, and even if he lacks the wit or will to correct them, he can realize that they are going to shade with negative tones all his mental, emotional, and physical interests and pursuits.

If such a one chooses religion of any kind as an avenue of release or self-expression, it is inevitable that personality pressures will be transferred to this new field of interest where they will be apparent as extraordinary intensities and, under certain conditions, develop rapidly into fanaticism. Religion is not a cure-all, for while it may contain many solutional elements, the religionist himself is unable to escape from the personality tendencies which have disrupted his life merely by changing his beliefs or affiliations. He probably had constructive beliefs of some kind or another all his life, but they were not sufficient to overcome or reduce his dispositional equation.

Persons unhappy within themselves, disgruntled, disillusioned, disappointed or lacking internal poise, must expect the study of mysticism or any other branch of abstract thinking to lead to further personality peculiarities. In religion, of course, a new set of symbols becomes available and these become the media for the expression of tensions.

When a business man, either through overwork or overworry, has a nervous breakdown, he develops a number of symptoms suitable to reveal the pressures which have undermined his health. He may exhibit extreme hypersensitivity or have the symptoms of various diseases. Hysteria may interfere with sensory function or bring on pseudoangina. The matter-of-fact citizen, recognizing the general dimensions of his ailment, retires to a sanitarium, takes an ocean voyage, develops hobbies, or simply accepts his condition and rests until natural recuperative processes restore him to normal function. While passing through the experience, however, he is most miserable, fearful, discouraged,



and, likely enough, becomes for a time an acute hypochondriac.

There are forms of the nervous breakdown which include hallucinations and temporary derangements of the mentality. When such arise, exceptional care must be taken to prevent the patient from endangering the permanent values of his life. Much thoughtfulness and patience must be exercised by those attending such forms of sickness. Medical assistance is usually indicated, but recovery is essentially a matter of assisting Nature to repair the damage caused by exhaustion.

Many who take up religious studies are on the verge of a nervous breakdown at the time they approach the subject. Their initial interest has been influenced by a great shock, or bereavement, a material loss, or some chronic personality maladjustment. We may almost say that they collapse at the door of the church, and for this reason religion is falsely blamed for the peculiar people that predominate in most congregations. The tendency for the unhappy to seek solace in sanctuary is as old as recorded history. Religion often does a great deal to help these unfortunates, but it cannot force them to mend their basic mental and emotional patterns.

There are many degrees of nerve-exhaustion symptoms. There is not always a complete collapse, but an exaggeration of tendencies and a marked loss of control over the mind and the emotions. There are cases where these simple fatigue symptoms have actually been interpreted as indicating spiritual advancement, illumination, or initiation. In cases where the student has a long history of frustrations and neurotic tendencies, his accounts of mystical things heard and seen must be examined and weighed with more than ordinary care. A prominent stockbroker during a nervous breakdown developed the hallucination that his banker was bringing him fantastic reports about certain investments. The sick man was absolutely convinced that the banker visited him daily and engaged in long conversations

and discussions. He believed that he saw the banker, and could not understand why no one else shared the vision. The condition cleared up in a few weeks and, of course, the banker in question had never been near the sanitarium. After his recovery, the stockbroker was most amused at the trick he had played upon himself.

Had this occurred to the devotee of some cult, the whole case would have assumed an entirely different coloring. The hallucination would have been regarded as a spirit visitation, and, as the spirit in question would have no permanent address, it would be impossible to verify the facts. Even after recovery from other nervous symptoms, the patient would at least have doubts and reservations. In the universe of the miraculous all things are possible, and we get into serious trouble when we try to disillusion the eager believer against his will. Among psychological phenomena reported in hospitals as affecting those without any special religious interests, are nearly all types of psychic manifestations. The patient sees persons not present, various monsters and unhuman creatures, hears voices, has visions of distant places, develops a sense of detachment from his own physical body, experiences a variety of light and color phenomena, and the most distressing and disconcerting feelings of motion, activity, and pressure within his own body. If the nervous system is sufficiently deranged, its reflexes and reactions can be utterly fantastic. If the mind does not accept these fantasies for what they are, but attempts to rationalize them, a complete bewilderment is almost inevitable. Ordinarily, all of these hallucinations disappear as the patient recovers, although he may retain a memory of part of the condition.

Transpose this into the sphere of metaphysics and one will immediately perceive the possibilities of permanent disorientation. Many nervous ailments never become sufficiently severe to receive proper diagnosis and treatment. The patient gradually recovers without



knowing the nature of his own illness. In proportion, hallucination may be slight and intermittent, and these borderline problems are especially difficult to correct as all the elements are but dimly formulated. There can be no doubt, however, that a variety of fantasies originate below the threshold of consciousness as pressures or compulsions, and in times of special mental or emotional fatigue or stress float to the surface with most disconcerting results.

There is one sure rule for analyzing pseudopsychic communications, regardless of the form in which they appear. Suppose, for example, that a sensitive and somewhat neurotic person is convinced that he is receiving communications from a decarnate entity. Such entities may either seem to be illustrious or sanctified spirits or simply wandering ghosts with gregarious instincts. I have examined messages supposedly given by Plato, Jesus, Napoleon, George Washington, King Arthur, Socrates, William Shakespeare, and others too numerous to mention. It is generally observable that these messages are totally lacking in the merit, style, and strength which might be expected from such sources. In the process of transition from this life to the Summerland, the immortals lost both their wisdom and their wit. Napoleon was unable to describe any detail of military science, and the others were equally uninformed about themselves, the work of their lives, or the times in which they had lived. Always there was a promise of some great revelation to come, but it never arrived and nothing of practical value was accomplished through the devotion and honest endeavor of the so-called medium.

As even the Bible recommends that we try the spirits, there seems no good reason that we should not ask Napoleon exactly what he was doing the afternoon of July 10, 1803. Either he can tell us or his memory is so bad that we may doubt any other information he bestows. There are several breaks in the lives of illustrious persons which might be well

worth filling, but, to date, their spirits have not obliged. In substance, it is most valuable to determine whether any so called spirit communication contains exact information that can be verified and checked which is utterly beyond the capacity of the medium to know or to have known at some time during his present life. To make the investigation conclusive, we must also take into account things read, heard, or seen years before which have passed from conscious memory and are stored only in that wonderfully retentive subconscious. A specific circumstance which can only be verified by long and careful search among documents, papers, or works that have remained untouched for centuries might lead us to assume the possibility of a genuine psychic communication. Many elements must be taken into consideration before we are justified in accepting material from an unknown and obscure source.

Communications which are obviously wish-fulfillments should be heavily discounted. Promises of early illumination or initiation or recommendations for the formation of cults and sects are exactly what some folk want to hear and believe. Persons long frustrated and inhibited can dream of themselves as leaders of world-shaking revelations, receiving the homage of adoring multitudes. Much daydreaming without psychotic complications takes that form, for we all seem to share in the common desire to be exceptional and honored. The more frustrated has been our daily sphere of activity and the less we have enjoyed of prestige or recognition, the more insistent the desire becomes. If this very human ambition breaks through from the subconscious by way of some vision or other mystical phenomenon, we receive it with an open consciousness and embrace it fondly.

Those in whom material ambitions are not especially strong may be content to rest in their private atmosphere of the miraculous for a long time. The principal damage resulting from this state of affairs is the drift away from ob-



jective experience. All values are created, analyzed, applied, and contemplated without any reference to the realities of the environmental sphere. When, for some reason, a person so-dominated by these mystical preoccupations is suddenly forced to reassume his objective career, he is ill-prepared for the task. He attempts to impose a completely theoretical concept upon an entirely factual condition, only to find that the two are incompatible.

From these observed and recorded facts, we feel it highly important that the truth seeker should correct certain immoderations within himself before he takes on any abstract system of study. Abstractions belong in a sphere where proving and testing are usually difficult and often impossible. We can be devoted to certain beliefs and defend them as facts and assume that they will be so accepted by others, and yet we have no tangible experiential proof of their validity. It requires an exceedingly well-balanced personality and a trained mind to maintain reasonable attitudes and moderate judgments in the attenuated realm of metaphysical speculation. If our personality pressures indicate that we are not equipped for such an undertaking, discretion becomes the better part of valor.

Normal, happy people carry their religious convictions with simplicity, tolerance, and dignity, but the pressureful lack these gifts and even condemn what they do not possess. In many cults the moderate member is considered lukewarm and unfit for the mighty challenge of salvation. If he counsels caution, he is chicken-livered; if he mentions reasonable doubts, he is a heretic; and if he thinks for himself, he is a total loss to most organizations. Every effort, therefore, must be made to indoctrinate him with the prevailing fervor. Yet it remains true that the quiet, self-contained, orderly, conscientious, and optimistic member is the only one who does any real credit to his convictions.

Entirely apart from the nervous-breakdown factor in psychological phenomena

is the hypnotic effect of indoctrination. We know that human beings long exposed to certain ideas have a tendency to accept at least some of them and to absorb fragments of others. Where there is considerable emotional intensity and the imaginative faculty is dominant, there is considerable visualization of things heard or read. Metaphysicians have little worlds of their own, small groups revolving around pivotal personalities. Discussions become intense, individuals recount unexplained incidents from their own lives, and meditate upon the mysteries of history. The sphere of the miraculous comes very close to these rather narrow circles of enthusiasts. Daydreaming helps to set the inclinations, and in such cases psychological phenomena are almost automatically induced.

This condition cannot be fully appreciated without some direct contact with a way of life which, to the materialistic thinker, is reminiscent of the *Arabian Nights*. In the religious community, for example, the larger world of prosaic problems and responsibilities almost ceases to exist. It is viewed only as a distant sphere awaiting missionaries. The community spirit is one of intense devotion to some teacher or teaching which is the primary subject of conversation. The world is seen through the perspective of a highly conditioned point of view. The metaphysical is taken for granted, and in some cases elementals are supposed to lurk in every flowerbed, thought forms flutter about in the atmosphere, and high vibrations from here or there are bombarding congenial mortals. To enter one of these communities from the profane sphere of making a living, or to leave this realm and return to the mundane melee are shocks of consequence. To the rest of humanity the small religious community is an aggregation of eccentrics, but to the members themselves it is the one zone of enlightenment in a befuddled universe.

These little groups of hermits would probably fare better if they were busier



and had broader objective activities. Frequently, however, they are dominated by an elderly committee seeking peace and seclusion and a comforting place to end their days. Youth is a disturbing factor and its presence is not encouraged. New ideas are uncomfortable and interfere with a well-worn routine. It is from these types of associations that many notions and doctrines are sent forth in a very sincere desire to enlighten less privileged mortals. The teachings themselves are not necessarily bad; in fact, they are most idealistic, but they often bring discord and unhappiness and sometimes actual tragedy to those still forced by circumstances to make their living in a materialistic social order. Impractical, theoretical, unproved metaphysical teachings are responsible for much unbalanced thinking and the attendant emotional immoderations.

Nearly all students of esoteric subjects pass through a cycle which includes some form of hallucination. This is the sphere of the astral light, and legitimate teachers never fail to warn their disciples of the dangers that lurk in this enchanted garden of self-delusion. It is most dangerous for those in whose natures some element of ulterior motive is conditioning the spiritual quest. Perhaps, in fact, we may say that the astral light exists primarily to sift out ulterior motives and to force the disciple to correct the condition in himself or else becomes the victim of hallucination.

Ulterior motives in religion are often so thoroughly concealed and so completely justified that exposing them requires considerable patience and skill. Experience shows us that only a small percentage of people want to get wiser and better simply for love of wisdom or virtue. There are always certain other elements and factors, and in these lurk potentials of tragedy. Ulterior motives are of many kinds, mostly personal, but sometimes apparently quite unselfish. When one asks folks why they have resolved to seek truth, one gets a variety of answers, some of which would

not survive the lie detector. The sick want to get well; the poor wish to be rich; the miserable want to be happy; the lonely desire friendship and affection; the ambitious sense larger opportunities; and the avaricious, unusual profits. Most memberships include a number of devotees with warm personal feelings for the leader or with an eye to his empty shoes. It is all very spiritual, for even the most practical consideration can be glamorized.

At the beginning, these private purposes have slight significance in the sense that their consequences are not obvious, but as the individual advances in his search for truth the ulterior motives intensify also and often escape control and become devastating forces. The compound, for example, of ulterior motives intensifying imagination and the belief in the availability of spiritual means to accomplish personal ends leads almost inevitably toward sorcery. Once confused, the individual begins to fear the very forces he has attempted to use upon others. Organizations have been completely destroyed by the terrors of malpractice, when not a single member had sufficient knowledge to have actually practiced any degree of black magic. They simply victimized themselves and each other with their own fears.

Most metaphysicians who suffer from persecution complexes have never been persecuted by anyone except themselves. Often, however, we find that these sufferers had attempted in one way or another to practice unethical means of accomplishing cherished projects. Remember, the moment we believe that we can force another person to do something against his own will, we must accept at the same time, at least subconsciously, the inevitable implication that someone else can do the same to us. Thus we fall into the trap we have set for another. Coincidence may enlarge the common fear.

Knowing that we have thought unkindly about some neighbor, we learn afterward that he had a spell of sickness or an accident. We immediately begin



to assume that we can loose mighty vibrations at will. As this contributes to a sense of importance, the thought is pleasant, even if we resolve to administer this rare gift with a high measure of integrity. But the same afternoon, we trip over the doormat and have a nasty fall. It immediately seems reasonable that our neighbor is returning our previous favor with interest. The gauntlet has been thrown down; a mighty war of minds is indicated. One moment the strategy is offensive, and the next, defensive. The thrust and parry of high vibrations prove conclusively that our adversary is a worthy foe. Disaster follows disaster until hard feelings reach a fever heat. By this time we have consulted several practitioners who have assured us that we are obviously the victim of psychic malpractice, and the martyr in us glows with pride. Various remedies are suggested, including several selected from ancient manuscripts.

The spells and incantations are usually partly effective, but not quite strong enough to clear the situation. The original teacher, from whom we learned how to develop a dominant mentality, has already given up in despair or left the community. Our relatives are at their wits ends, and we are rapidly passing into decline, but we are going down with the flag of high principle nailed to the masthead.

After a long session of this type of hallucination, the sufferer is in no condition to be told that his troubles are imaginary. He will immediately seek help from someone who really understands the critical state through which he is passing. Actually, neither the sufferer nor his neighbor has enough mental power to influence in the slightest degree the destiny of a pollywog. In fact, the neighbor doesn't even know what is happening, and merely wonders why the folk next door are behaving so strangely. The various practitioners, who assume that all eccentricity is obsession, direct their own mental efforts, if any, to a nonexistent ailment, but

the patient temporarily improves because of the autosuggestive factor. A condition of this kind will go on until someone sees the light of common sense, but the spreading of such light is a thankless task. The victim wants the difficulty to be important and will continue until he finds someone who "really understands"—at ten dollars the visit.

This condition is so prevalent among the mentalist groups that it seems to deserve considerable attention. Several prominent teachers advocating the power of mind over someone else's affairs have finally collapsed completely because in the end they believed their own teachings. They then become much like the sick doctor, who has so little faith in his own profession that he would sooner die of disease than trust his fellow practitioners. It is certainly a terrible mistake to teach negative mental practices which permit students to believe that the universe is filled with malicious forces ever-seeking to dominate the minds of ordinary folks. Give such a message to a frustrated and neurotic person and he is on a road which can end in serious pathology.

Nine out of ten cases involving so-called psychic factors break down under careful examination and prove to be only exaggerated psychological delusions. Before, however, the mind can accept these fantasies, it must most artfully and cunningly deceive itself. There is always a foreground of false reasoning built up to justify or defend a condition in itself basically unreasonable. We must pile confusion upon confusion before we can destroy the rational defense mechanism. Thus each case appears persuasively to be possible or likely. Always, however, the logical sequences of thinking are inconsistent, are based upon false premises or are defective in matters of conclusion.

We cannot help any of these people until we can convince them that certain basic concepts which they hold, usually as sacred beliefs, are actually wrong and false. Frequently it is not possible to



do this, for it is difficult to force any individual to acknowledge a major fault in himself. Until he sees straight, he will not recover; but to see straight, he must change beliefs so strong that they possess him and are responsible for his suffering.

Most informed and conscientious spiritualists agree that persons passing out of this life are no less honorable and intelligent than they were while residing here. There is no justification for assuming that those dwelling beyond the veil should suddenly plague innocent mortals or resort to threats, insults, and profanity in order to communicate through some bewildered psychic. Honorable entities desiring to accomplish some constructive work would have no reason to obsess an innocent person whom they have not even known on the physical plane, and cause that person acute psychic stress and a variety of painful or annoying bodily symptoms. We would have little patience or regard for some earthly neighbor who came into our home as an uninvited guest and then took over the management of our affairs, berating us whenever we failed to humor his moods. It is doubtful if entities that indulge such methods can be trusted or their information relied upon.

Certainly, the rare cases in which the intervention from the spirit world could be useful or valuable would be handled with greater dignity and consideration. There seems no essential difference in terms of quality between a nagging and troublesome apparition and an incarnate nuisance of the same caliber. We are all surrounded in this world by friends, relatives, and associates reminiscent of Job's comforters. Sometimes these troublesome characters are well-intentioned, but not infrequently they have no intentions at all or are motivated by highly selfish and unreasonable attitudes. Similar pests from across the void deserve similar treatment, and their conduct should not be tolerated merely because there are hints that some great revelation is imminent. In substance, if

psychic manifestations are unpleasant, uncomfortable, or detrimental in any way, they should be immediately and resolutely discouraged.

There is also something amiss in the rather familiar situation of some so-called visitor from the etheric hinterland burdening a totally unqualified mortal with a project which would require the wisdom of a Solomon and the ingenuity of an international banker. If a vast enterprise is contemplated, there should be some wisdom used by the spirits in the selection of an instrument. To entrust a docile housewife with the formation of a world religion or some tired business man, who has never been able to balance his own budget, with the reconstruction of the economic system would appear decidedly unreasonable. Either the selectee develops a horrifying egomania or else dissolves into the despair of utter ineffectiveness. It appears wiser to assume that someone is mistaken than to cherish the notion that the universe is without some guiding intelligence.

It occasionally happens that an element of doubt exists as to the merits of these psychic problems. Perhaps some departed Edison, Steinmetz, or Osler sincerely desires to share a last legacy with those he has left behind. Under such conditions a medium or natural sensitive would be justified in making this possible, even at a high cost to himself. When a situation arises in which such a possibility presents itself, the matter usually can be satisfactorily arbitrated.

On occasion we have recommended that the sensitive assign a definite period in which he is willing and ready to receive such impressions or communications. For instance, the medium can offer himself as a vehicle for thirty days. If the message that is so urgent is not delivered within that length of time, there is no reason to hope that it will ever be delivered. If after vast pretensions all that the spirit of Edison can bring through is some very bad poetry or some inane generality about astral



sunsets, he might be advised to retire to etheric privacy until he reorganizes his own thoughts. As there is no reason to assume that Edison would degenerate into an intellectual nonentity, it would be safer to decide that he had never been present.

Negative psychical states are habit-forming and, allowed to drift along, seldom, if ever, improve in quality. The psychic loses the normal opportunity to unfold his own spiritual, mental, and emotional life, catering to worthless notions and an ever-intensifying pressure of meaningless impulses. As noneventuation is the rule rather than the exception and not one out of a hundred of these psychic situations ever bears fruit, it is a mistake to tolerate any of them indefinitely. If the psychic will sit down quietly and analyze the situation without permitting emotional glamour to distort judgment, he will come to the same conclusion himself.

Unfortunately, those receiving messages are not always in a position to judge the value of the contents. Something may seem very wonderful to them which is of no value whatever in terms of actual information. Utility is the justification for effort in any field. When some supposed Atlantean priest goes into excruciating details about life on the island of Mu, 100,000 B. C., there is no way of proving or disproving the choice revelation, which at best belongs in the category of science-fiction. Even if this remote Atlantean assures us that we are under the mantle of his divine guidance, the utility factor remains indefinite. Like as not, we would be better off if he returned quietly to the stream of evolution and permitted us to work out our own salvation with proper diligence.

Whether the phenomenon be psychological or actually psychical may be of interest, but its effects in either case are of immediate consequence. Experience proves that except in rare cases addiction to phenomena of any kind is unprofitable to all concerned. Even if the Atlantean priest actually exists, he will

have as much trouble with his psychic receiving station as the receiving station has with him. Most sensitives will try the patience of the noblest and most advanced entity. The partnership will end in a compound headache with everyone concerned much the worse for wear.

Most psychologists know the unfortunate results of overinfluence. Parents attempting to dominate the lives of their children, friends taking over our mortal problems, and even trained counselors giving advice too frequently or with too much authority contribute to personality deterioration. The human being sometimes needs help and encouragement, but these should be given with caution and restraint. The psychic factor in itself is enough to cause undue influence. The average person lacks the strength to resist that which is substantiated by the marvelous or the miraculous. We may reject the opinions of our associates, but if these opinions are accompanied by table-rappings or are spelled out on Ouija boards they become almost irresistible. Our critical faculties are bewildered, the emotional content takes over, and we are enslaved by what may be only a subconscious impulse of our own.

The human personality contains several compound units of which one usually becomes dominant and is the person we recognize as ourselves. The subdominant personalities retire below the threshold of conscious awareness, but do not necessarily cease to exist. In the case of schizophrenia, we have the emergence of a subdominant personality. This phenomenon itself was once regarded as spirit possession, but now we know that this is not the case. Under such conditions in which the dominant personality is damaged or its sphere of activity impaired, it may lose authority and release more wonders than were ever hidden in Pandora's box. Usually, the subdominant pressures are lower ethically and morally than the normal governing pattern. Frequently, persons thinking themselves obsessed report that



they have been impelled to actions, thoughts, or feelings which offend and outrage their normal sensibilities. So-called entities make horrible suggestions, indulge in blasphemy and profanity, incite to violence, and incline to release frustrations and neurotic compulsions through morbid and dangerous demands and requirements.

For this reason, we seldom find a so-called possessed or obsessed person who finds peace, contentment, happiness, or personal improvement resulting from his condition. The most negative of his instincts and the most unpleasant of his appetites are stimulated and forced upon him as though they were separate, living creatures—the demons of antiquity. He may not even recognize these tempers as parts of his own nature, because they have long been nourished on negative attitudes which he has repressed and denied.

When man for any reason destroys or negates the authority of his objective personality, he threatens himself with an invasion of negative pressures from his own subconscious. Fear and disorientation contribute to the loss of personality sufficiency, but do not in any way transform or transmute the subconscious load. So-called entity possession is often merely the transference of personality leadership from a higher to a lower level of consciousness. If this process is continued, the descent from level to level brings with it an appropriate loss of human instincts and a commensurate intensification of bestial propensities. In substance, it is a sad and foolish business.

When through some disorientation of the psyche negative forces begin to nag at the objective consciousness, destroying rest, causing nerve tension, and setting up fear and worry mechanisms, it is time for the sufferer to arm himself for the work at hand. Nothing is to be gained by battling shadows. Do not try to tear down that which is already negative; rather set to work immediately strengthening the dominant personality. It alone has the authority and

power to control the submerged parts of itself. The more we develop, improve, and enrich the focused consciousness that we call the person, the less trouble we will have from the submerged instincts. Also, these negative impulses are reduced and finally transmuted by the conscious enlarging and strengthening of the personality. Ultimately, it is our task to bring all parts of ourselves to normalcy and co-operation. This we do by conscious growth, by the transmutation of instincts before they are submerged, and by the starving out of failings and defects. Through the moderation of our natures, we reduce subconscious pressures, and through constructive activities, we release energies before they ferment and create psychic toxins.

As we remarked earlier, psychological phenomena are due to our inability to transmute frustrations and neurotic tendencies. There is only one way to cure a frustration and that is to find a constructive channel for the release of the pressure. Failure to do this can, and sometimes does, result in psychological phenomena. As the frustration itself is dangerous, so its release through improper expression is almost certain to be detrimental. The more desperately we attempt to prevent frustrations from escaping the control of the will, the more violent must be the ultimate combustion.

An individual who is unhappy or has long nursed real or imaginary grievances is building disaster for himself and tragedy for those around him. While we may not all have the capacity for an exuberant kind of happiness, we must attain a state of contentment which lowers pressure rather than merely inhibiting it. If there are situations in our lives which make adjustment impossible, then we must change these situations or develop the internal understanding which enables us to adjust to inevitables graciously and lovingly. The first course is the more objective, but the second the more permanent and valuable. Either, however, is better than



the perpetuation of an unendurable state of affairs.

Experience has shown me that the majority of those who come with what they believe to be psychic disturbances are basically unadjusted persons. They are antisocial or have relapsed into ways of thinking and living which are without positive, constructive values. They have indulged in self-pity, felt themselves to be martyrs, or have concluded that the world is a miserable and painful sphere which must be resisted or endured as a necessary evil. Few of them have suffered nearly as much as they themselves believe. Their burdens and duties have not been heavier than the average lot, but have been badly carried. Religion has been cultivated as an escape, and under its sedational influence there has been further damage to the objective requirements of the personality.

If, therefore, it should happen that mysterious visions or strange sensations intrude upon a quiet program of study and research, the truth seeker should pause and take immediate stock of his own temperament and disposition. Perhaps he is fatiguing his mental resources and, therefore, is developing too much tension. Again, it is possible that he is beyond his depth mentally and is unable to cope with the abstractions he is trying to understand. Or, in the cause of his religious convictions, he may be imposing impractical disciplines or limitations upon a personality unsuited for such restrictions. Most likely of all, he is simply confused, trying too hard and suffering from an unbalance of activities.

In such a plight, a moderate examination of his way of life prior to his metaphysical interests is indicated. Instead of blaming his troubles upon some system of religion or philosophy, he should inquire as to the burden of frustrations, phobias, and neuroses he brought along with his mystical aspirations. When these negative factors in his own nature become unpleasantly evident, no amount of further study will completely erase them. The answer is to take knowl-

edge gained and inspiration derived from study and meditation and apply them to the direct correction of character faults and deficiencies. The issues cannot be evaded, and the more we try to ignore or deny them, the larger the problems become. After all, what we learn we are supposed to use, and the correction of our own earlier mistakes is a practical proof of the utility of newly acquired knowledge.

It is observable that when a person suffering from psychological or psychical phenomena is convinced that what is occurring is not important the symptoms immediately lessen. The mind must contribute some kind of substantiation to intensify the unpleasant occurrences. The most common substantiation is fear, by which we immediately bestow a kind of homage or acceptance. We do not fear the trivial, and by the very process of fearing we admit the reality and even the danger of the thing feared. We can sympathize with the nervous lady who confided to a friend that if she ever saw a ghost she would fall dead. With such an attitude she is already creating by her own imagination a pattern which will survive to plague her consciousness. Even assuming that she should sometime see a real or imaginary spirit, there is no reason why such a happening should prove her undoing. The same lady is convinced that human beings are immortal and that she herself with the rest will sometime exist as a spirit being. This thought does not worry her, but it seems that direct evidence of the proof of her own convictions would be too, too much.

Many old English families have inherited at least psychological spooks along with the ancestral plate and the family manse. Long familiarity with the concept has overcome the element of novelty, and, unless the entity has malicious tendencies, the ghost is accepted as one of the family. When the clanking of chains and the heavy footsteps are heard, the head of the house looks up from the financial page of the *London Times*, observing casually:



"There is old Lord Rodney again, bless his soul." With such an attitude, there is seldom any trouble between the worlds unless some psychic investigators move in and annoy Lord Rodney. He may interpret such research as an intrusion upon his privacy and react accordingly.

We advise those who come with psychic problems to relax the tensions caused by fear and uncertainty and take a matter-of-fact attitude. Nine times out of ten this ends the phenomenon, which is only hysteria due to metaphysical indigestion. Spirits are traditionally believed to inhabit ancient ruins, old and deserted houses, graveyards, places of execution, and similar melancholy spots. They shun the light of day, remain aloof from gaiety and happiness, and return to their graves when the cock crows at dawn. Psychological spooks frequent those gloomy and decadent zones of the subconscious which correspond to the melancholy places of the earth. They rise from the graves of dead hopes and from the ruins of old memories, and they depart in haste at the approach of spiritual or mental light. When day breaks in us, the specters fade like mist at dawn. When we clean out the gloomy ruins within

ourselves, there is no suitable habitation for the shadows of lost causes.

There is no essential evil in Nature, no intent to plague mortals with horrible phantoms. Such a sad condition must be caused by the individual, and the cure lies in the correction of the cause. Socrates paid homage to happy spirits and found each grove and glade the habitation of useful and kindly creatures ever-ready to serve mankind. Having experienced the universe as full of goodness, the philosopher had no place in his own soul for fear. He lived his convictions and died with a good hope. If we do not acknowledge the existence of injustice, we are seldom the victims of any mysterious evil agency. If, however, we lack within ourselves a deep and abiding confidence about the integrity of universals, we plague ourselves with innumerable deceptions. The remedy is to live and think constructively, develop our internal resources naturally and graciously, correct our faults, forget the past, and dedicate the present and the future to useful and constructive enterprises. The spook, if any, cannot endure such optimism, and departs in search of a more congenial ruin to haunt.



Aristotle said: "Learning is an ornament to a man in prosperity, and a refuge to him in adversity."

The word *academy* is derived from the name of an obscure Athenian property owner named Academus. After the death of this gentleman, his house and gardens were used by Plato for his school.

The word *milliner* is corrupted from *Milaner*, meaning *a person from Milan, Italy*. The city for some time dominated English fashions, especially styles in hats.

In the year of Grace 700, the Lord's Prayer, when written in English, began like this: "Uren fader thie are in hiefnas, sio gokagud thin noma, to eyemeth thin rick; sic thin willa suc is in heofnas and in ertho."





## Library Notes

By A. J. HOWIE

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### Words to the Living -- About the Dead

"O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?"

Soon or late, the great transition of death comes to all—suddenly, without warning to some; lingeringly, reluctantly to others; inevitably to all.

*Life*, reporting on the recent crash of a Bolivian P-38 in which 55 died, the pilot the only survivor, dramatizes the contrasts—a member of the House of Representatives, a famous cartoonist, a one and a half year-old baby, two Puerto Rican nurses, a grandmother taking her first, and last, flight, a former Tammany politician who had a seat on a later plane but suddenly decided to take this one. Some had raced to make the plane, others had delayed. The article closes with a quotation from Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*: "Some say that we shall never know and that to the gods we are like flies that the boys kill on a summer day, and some say, on the contrary, that the very sparrows do not lose a feather that has not been brushed away by the finger of God."

Death seems universally to be feared—abhorred. Creeds, sects, cults, perpetuate varying opinions and convictions regarding this ultimate observable physical experience. Yet such teachings

prove small comfort during the critical culmination; seemingly they are of little reassurance for the survivors, the dying being less concerned probably because dulled by the slow process of approaching death.

Speculation concerning death enters into practically every subject included in our library. The predictive arts and systems of character analysis speculate concerning indications for length of life—negatively, the time of death. Alchemy and the biological sciences search out methods for prolonging life—for avoiding the changes of aging and death. Philosophy and religion state and restate purposes of life—much slanted toward insuring individual continuity after death. Psychism, witchcraft, demonology, sorcery, magic traffic with the invocation of, or communion with the entities beyond the pale of life as we know it. Archaeology and the social sciences include study of the burial habits of previous civilizations, races, religions. Creeds and fraternal rituals have ceremonies proper to be recited for the dead.

With all of this emphasis, where can one turn for positive comfort when a loved one passes on?

Grief seems to unbalance the emotional floodgates. Expressions of sympathy from friends only arouse fresh



pangs of sorrow. In fact, personal grief has not seemed sufficient if we consider the not so obsolete custom of hiring professional mourners.

Sorrow aids neither the deceased nor those who remain behind. Sorrow usually has a very selfish motivation, and great wailing is usually a vocalizing of concern for what will happen to those left in the land of the so-called living rather than for the fate and progress of the departed.

With such a pattern of human reaction commonly observable, it would seem reasonable for students of religion, philosophy, metaphysics to establish a measure of understanding within themselves that would prepare each himself to meet the angel of death with courage, confidence, faith, perhaps firsthand knowledge, and enable each to speed the departing friend or relative with words fraught with the same sublime certainty.

The apparent trend in Western conventions, however slow, is to emancipate families from many of the traditional funeral customs. There are fewer widows who shroud themselves in mourning veils. There was a time—just a few years back—when gossiping tongues would have wagged and friends would have condemned her for such an omission. It is no longer disrespectful to the dead not to lock up the musical instruments in the household for one or two years after the passing of a member of the family. Even the elaborate rituals are being modified. With the increased use of "funeral homes", the family need no longer live for days with the heavy odors of flowers and association smells that haunt the emotions for years afterwards.

Death has always been expensive. The physical decencies are expensive. Many communities have imposed civil taxes. Nor has the Church been ungenerous to herself in the matter of charges for rites and rituals, and there have been undignified struggles to maintain a church monopoly on hallowed

ground for burials. All of which befits a material age.

Lavish funeral displays are not particularly occidental indulgences. East and West measure respect for the dead by the costliness of the funeral. Ripley's "Believe It or Not" recently gave the fabulous cost of the funeral of Alexander the Great which was described as the most expensive funeral in history. The funeral corteges of the kings and queens of England have always shown expensive concern for convention. This magnificence has been reflected among the poor who go into debt for costly cemetery lots, funerals, coffins, and apurtenances for reasons that have absolutely no foundation in religion or philosophy.

But at the same time that we can benefit by some of these hard won reforms, certain expenditures are gradually being made legally necessary right under our own noses. Little is done to prevent cemeteries and morticians from influencing legislation through professional lobbyists. A body may not be cremated in California unless the corpse is fully embalmed and properly encased in a coffin—expensive and illogical. Other localities provide similar legal idiosyncrasies.

As if such scandals were not sufficient, consider an U. P. news item dated February 15, 1950, at Pittsburgh:

*Launch drive to unionize pallbearers.* Pallbearers today voted to join the AFL here and launched a drive to completely unionize funerals. Patsy A. Cancro Jr., head of the Professional Pallbearers Service, announced that members voted 53 to 19 to join the union and henceforth will "require" undertakers to hire union men only. Relatives and friends of the deceased can be honorary pallbearers, Cancro said. If you want a real sporty funeral with the pallbearers dressed in tails and striped trousers, the "carrying charge" is \$4 per pallbearer. Dressed in gray flannel it is \$3.50, and blue serge \$3.

"We're going to make funerals dignified," Cancro said. "All our pallbearers



will be the same height and will wear the same kind of clothes. It's a very grave matter with us. We practice with an empty casket to learn to perform in unison and add dignity to a funeral."

This "grave" matter amounts to robbing the living, backed by the strength of union affiliation, instead of ghoulishly robbing the tombs of the dead. It seems hardly necessary to condemn this misuse of the American Federation of Labor. Anyway, such an expense would not add too much to the total as long as we spend substantial sums for tombstones or elaborate urns for the ashes of the cremated—the latter expense required in California and other places where the ashes of the dead may no longer be thrown to the winds or on the waters, but must repose in a properly licensed cemetery—for a substantial fee.

Henry Steel Olcott has preserved in his *Old Diary Leaves*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1895, the story of the first cremation in the United States, in a specially built crematorium. He mentions the only two known previous cremations in the United States, both of which were performed in the open air on pyres. The first was that of the body of Henry Laurens in South Carolina, 1816. Laurens ordered his executors to burn his corpse and compelled his family to acquiesce by the testamentary proviso that they should not inherit his estate unless his wishes were strictly carried out. Accordingly, his body was burnt on his own plantation in the Eastern fashion on a funeral pyre in the open air. His family and near relations were present. Olcott only mentions the name of the other case, but gives no details other than that a pyre was used.

The first formal cremation took place December 6, 1876, at Washington, Pennsylvania, about 25 miles west of Pittsburgh.

Olcott had joined a dilettante group called the New York Cremation Society. But nothing had been done beyond passing resolutions and issuing pamphlets until the Baron de Palm willed his sup-

posed wealth to the Theosophical Society and requested that the society cremate his body in accordance with the Eastern traditions. He died May 25, 1876. So here now was a body to burn to inaugurate the reform advocated by the New York Cremation Society. Olcott offered the baron's body to the society which accepted it.

In the meantime, the Theosophical Society prepared an impressive service—"pagan funeral" as the press called it. Olcott and H. P. B. composed a litany, devised a ceremonial, wrote a couple of Orphic hymns and set them to appropriate music. All of this became marvellous controversial fuel for the newspapers. There was such a stir of heated and bitter publicity that the New York Cremation Society withdrew its acceptance of the body on the eve of the funeral ceremonies. Olcott then assumed the full responsibility, pledging his word that the body should be burned if he had to do it himself.

The funeral ceremony was held in the Masonic Temple at 23rd Street and Sixth Avenue, New York City. Triangle shaped tickets of admission were printed, black cards with silver printing for reserved seats, and drab cards printed in black for general admission. Police guards were set to prevent the crowd that gathered an hour before the time for the services from crashing the doors. However, there was a mob rush at the last minute, and the hall that seated 2000 was filled to overflowing, tickets or no tickets, without any consideration for reservations. From the buzz of conversation and uneasiness prevailing, it was obvious that the multitude had come to gratify its curiosity with neither respect for the dead nor sympathy for Theosophical viewpoints.

All went peacefully enough until an excited Methodist, a relative of a brother of the Theosophical Society who was assisting Olcott in the ceremony, rose as Olcott pronounced the words "There is but one first cause, uncreated..." shouting "That's a lie!" The excitement reached fever pitch and anything seemed



likely to happen. But Olcott was equal to the emergency. He stepped quietly forward with an impressive majesty that was his, placed his left hand on the baron's coffin, stood silent, motionless, facing the audience. The hubbub quieted instantly as an air of expectancy settled. Olcott then raised his hand and said with slow, solemn emphasis: "We are in the presence of death!" Then with singleness of purpose, he finished the sentence of the litany—"eternal, infinite, unknown."

Mme. Blavatsky had no official part in the public celebration of the de Palm obsequies. But after reading the press reports of pulpit denunciations of the forthcoming cremation services, she could not remain silent for long. As the policeman was escorting the interruptor out of the hall, H. P. B. rose impulsively from her seat and callet out: "He's a bigot, that's what he is!" A general laugh in which she joined relieved the tension.

The body had to be kept at the Lutheran Cemetery until a crematorium could be built or found; also there was the matter of getting official permission to remove the body for cremation. F. Julius Le Moyne, M. D. was building a crematorium for his own body, and Olcott arranged to use it for the baron's body. The cremation actually took place December 6, 1876—after more than six months of red tape, critical public opinion, religious condemnation, and actual legal obstacles raised unnecessarily.

Relatives and friends have sought in various ways to perpetuate the memory of the departed. Churchyards and cemeteries have been consecrated to graves for the dead, and the custom has been to erect personal markers ranging in form from simple wooden crosses or marble slabs to elaborate monuments. The more wealthy have built sumptuous mausoleums—a word derived from the term applied to the tomb of Mausolus at Helicarnassus. Artemisia, the wife-sister of Mausolus, grieved unconsolably at his death. She drank the ashes from

his cremation in her wine. As a suitable tribute to his memory, she had erected a fabulous monument which was esteemed one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Hence the name mausoleum has been applied to all elaborate tombs. The Taj Mahal erected at Agra, India, by the Mogul Emperor Shah-Jahan, is the best known modern example of countless wealth being expended in this type of tribute to the memory of the dead.

Literally, an epitaph is any inscription upon a tomb. The custom of inscribing an epitaph to honor the dead developed early. Epitaphs usually testify to the virtue and honor of the departed, but collectors have found many personal touches in which the survivor expresses a frank sense of release. There is great beauty in some of the testimonials.

At various times epitaphs have been restricted to persons of great distinction, even England having had such laws. The Lacedemonians allowed the honor of epitaphs only to those soldiers who died bravely in battle, and to women who were distinguished by their chastity.

One of the most frequent expressions on the Roman tombs of both pagan and Christian times is a passage from Tacitus: "Light lie the earth upon thy grave." The Romans did not confine the use of this elegant and delicate feeling to tombs, but employed it on the lamps which they were in the habit of offering lighted at the tombs of the dead. The following is a beautiful example: "Adieu, Septimia; may the earth lie light upon thee; whoever places a burning lamp before this tomb, may a golden soil cover his ashes."

A comforting collection of thoughts on death will be found in Albert Pike's *Words from the Heart* spoken of his dead brethren. Pike, as Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States was called upon frequently to conduct Masonic funeral services. The few following quotations are indicative of the deeply



personal feeling which Pike felt for his fellow-Masons.

"The time, my brethren, is swiftly approaching for each of us when we shall lay aside the ranks and titles, the offices and honors of this world, and mutely receive in their stead the apparel and garniture of the funeral and the grave. We shall all soon escape from the strife and wranglings, the slanders and disparagements, the jealousies and pitiful littlenesses of this life and of time, and, entering Eternity, appear in the more immediate presence of Almighty God, to answer and give account how we have led this life of discipline and trial, how borne its successes and reverses, its crosses and injustices, and in what spirit and temper, noble or ignoble, we have lived and labored, joyed or sorrowed, hated or forgiven, conferred benefits or inflicted injuries for revenge.

"None of us are relieved of liability to the sorrows, the distresses and calamities of life. We all lose those whom we have long loved, and who are dearer to us than life and truer to us than friends; and when even their spirits hear not our agonized invocations, and cannot come to us to assure us of their continued love, and that it is immortal, how we treasure every relic, however slight, that testifies of the living love of those now dead, and of their labors of that love to serve us even in the humblest things.

"Why recite the long roll-call of human disappointments, bereavements and sorrows? God dispenses His calamities as justly as He dispenses His blessings; and these and all other ills that He sends upon us, if received by us in the proper spirit, may be so availed of as to become of profit and advantage.

"Thus it is, my brethren, that the ties which bind us to life are one after another broken, and it becomes easier for us to die. God does not use death as a punishment. Light and darkness constitute the eternal procession of the universe. When Death calls us to come, we are not at the end of our nature,

but there is a further state and life of which this is the beginning, and for it a preparation of discipline.

"None of us learns soon enough the lessons that life and death teach; and when the days of our Past are many and our Future few, we too often find that the opportunity for living well has gone from us, and that our life has been but a long chase after shadowy phantoms and glittering illusions. Then we wish that we had sooner learned the profitable lessons that age helps death to teach us; and would fain persuade those younger than ourselves to be wiser than we have been, and to heed the instructions of the hourly revelation of the Deity.

"The body decays, and its atoms return to the elements from which they were borrowed. Each element reclaims its own to put it to new uses. But the soul still lives, its life here only a part of its immortality. The veil which conceals from us that which is to be after death is no more impenetrable than that which hides from us the events of tomorrow.

"When the world has wearied of lamenting the loss of even its most illustrious dead, the friends that loved and the family that idolized still mourn for him with a softened melancholy. Nevertheless, as it is said in the *Hava Maal*, the Sublime Book of Odin, 'It is better to live well than to live long.' The length of a man's life is not measured by the number of hours during which he breathes, but by his actions, and their value wherewith he fills those otherwise empty hours. An useless life is less than a span long, though it lasts a century. To do nothing worth doing is no more than to sleep; and what were life if it were only one continuous sleep?

"The pale, still lips of the dead are very eloquent. With a pathos and impressiveness that no living lip can equal or even approach, they tell us how vain and empty are all the ambitions, hatreds, jealousies, the disputes and rivalries, the struggles for wealth and place



and power, for rank and reputation, of human life. When you shall have amassed your wealth and at last prepare to enter upon its enjoyment, Death shall lay his icy fingers on your heart to still its eager beating forever. Of all your lands, your body shall be content with a little corner; of all your wealth, with so much as will suffice to purchase the coffin and the shroud; and the residue shall go to your children or to strangers to be squandered; while, after a few short weeks, or even days, your fate shall cease to be lamented, or even your name to be mentioned.

"What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal. No man, however lofty or however humble, can isolate himself from his kind and determine to live for himself alone. We cannot all be heroes, statesmen, orators, great writers. Let each be hero to himself. Let us grow in love as well as in knowledge—from within, like the living oaks, as well as from without, like the hard cold crystals. Each one has only to do his best wherever he is born. Life is too short for dissensions and disputes, and the heart of the Mason should be softened towards the living and sanctified in the presence of the dead.

"There is no immortality of remembrance; and I, for my part, care nothing for the remembrance of the world of strangers, if I can be kindly remembered by my friends."

The student may speculate on thousands of pertinent questions concerning death. Superstitions at which we smile were of paramount importance during earlier periods. And who now is to draw an arbitrary line between what constitutes superstition in these matters and what may be fact in spite of an absence of visual proof. Perhaps old wives' tales contain essential truths.

Were the ancient Jews right to insist that burial is the only proper way to dispose of the dead? of never placing one body above another? Or were the

Parsees observing a divine precept by placing the dead in the "towers of silence" where birds of prey might strip the bones of their flesh? Or what prompted the primitive impulse to burn the bodies of the dead on great pyres? even with the wives, servants, and possessions of the dead man? Or did the Vikings know whence they sent their dead when they placed them in unmanned boats and headed them out into the open sea?

Do the dead require the funerary offerings that were so strictly prescribed by the Egyptians? Do the ancestors of the Chinese respond to the rites observed in their memory? Did Swedenborg rightly envision the mechanics of Heaven and Hell? What happens to the soul either in receiving extreme unction or in the absence of the last rites of the church? What of purgatory? of paradise? Are masses necessary for the progress of the soul?

Do the dead perpetuate their interests in this world by frequenting the seances of modern spiritualism? Is the fact that communication with the dead is uncertain, unsatisfactory, and usually indirect and not provable a denial of the phenomena?

There are numberless questions concerning the so-called dead that might be asked. Apparently they are unanswerable in any positive manner. However, we can state positively that it is possible to acquire a constructive inner conviction that will transcend all uncertainties. There are no words to convey to others an understanding of this conviction. But with such a conviction, one will live with greater purpose, with a great sense of continuity, with an affinity for, a participation in the divine dynamics of the universe.

In the next issue we shall digest portions from ancient writings affirming the early beliefs in the continuity of life for the individual. The West will be represented by Plato; the East by sections from the Mahabharata, the Uttara Gita, the Upanishads.



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